2018 · BAND 111 · HEFT 1

BYZANTINISCHE ZEITSCHRIFT

DE GRUYTER

ABSTRACTED/INDEXED IN Baidu Scholar · Base d'information bibliographique en patristique / Bibliographic Information Base in Patristics (BIBP) · Bibliographie biblique informatisée de Lausanne: BiBIL · Brepols: L'Année philologique · CNKI Scholar (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) · CNPIEC · De Gruyter: IBR (International Bibliography of Reviews of Scholarly Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences); IBZ (International Bibliography of Periodical Literature in the Humanities and Social Sciences) · EBSCO (relevant databases) · EBSCO Discovery Service · Elsevier: SCOPUS · ERIH PLUS (European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences) · Gale/Cengage · Genamics JournalSeek · Google Scholar · Index Islamicus · Index Theologicus · International Philosophical Bibliography: Répertoire bibliographique de la philosophie · J-Gate · JournalGuide · JournalTOCs · KESLI-NDSL (Korean National Discovery for Science Leaders) · Linguistic Bibliography · Microsoft Academic · Naviga (Softweco) · PhilPapers · Primo Central (ExLibris) · ProQuest (relevant databases) · Publons · ReadCube · SCImago (SJR) · Sherpa/RoMEO · Summon (Serials Solutions/ProQuest) · TDNet · Ulrich's Periodicals Directory/ulrichsweb · WanFang Data · WorldCat (OCLC)

ISSN 0007-7704 · e-ISSN 1864-449X

Alle Informationen zur Zeitschrift wie Hinweise für Autoren, Open Access, Bezugsbedingungen und Bestellformulare sind online zu finden unter www.degruyter.com/bz

HERAUSGEBER Albrecht Berger

REDAKTION Mareike Hubel, Maximilian de Molière, Institut für Byzantinistik, Universität München, Geschwister-Scholl-Platz 1, D-80539 München,
Telefon +49 (0) 89 2180 – 2390, Fax +49 (0) 89 2180 – 16520,
E-Mail: BZ-Redaktion@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

Alle Manuskripte und Korrekturen bitten wir an die Redaktion zu senden, auch Rezensionsexemplare sowie Sonderdrucke entlegener Publikationen zur Aufnahme in Abt. III. Unverlangt eingegangene Druckschriften werden in der Regel nicht zurückgeschickt.

JOURNAL MANAGER Esther Markus, De Gruyter, Genthiner Straße 13, 10785 Berlin, Germany, Tel.: +49 (0)30 260 05 – 127, Fax: +49 (0)30 260 05 – 250, E-Mail: esther.markus@degruyter.com

ANZEIGENVERANTWORTLICHER Claudia Neumann, De Gruyter, Genthiner Straße 13, 10785 Berlin, Germany. Tel.: +49 (0)30 260 05-226, Fax: +49 (0) 30 260 05-264 E-Mail: anzeigen@degruyter.com

DRUCK PRINTING Franz X. Stückle Druck und Verlag e.K., Ettenheim
Printed in Germany



Inhalt

I. ABTEILUNG

II. ABTEILUNG

Nachrichten

Alberto Bardi

Bessarione a lezione di astronomia da Cortasmeno

Abstract: Nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 (coll. 644), testimone del testo astronomico intitolato Παράδοσις εἰς τοὺς περσικοὺς κανόνας τῆς ἀστρονομίας (di seguito *Paradosis*), copiato da Bessarione, sono presenti delle aggiunte, dovute all'intervento di Bessarione stesso, che si ritrovano nella tradizione manoscritta dell'opera soltanto nei discendenti del Marc. gr. Z. 333. Tali aggiunte sono tratte da un testo astronomico di Isacco Argiro e da una versione della *Paradosis* riveduta da Teodoro Meliteniote. L'analisi filologica e paleografica dimostra che in entrambi i casi le aggiunte sono ricavate da un codice di Giovanni Cortasmeno. Ciò dimostra che il Bessarione ebbe Cortasmeno come maestro non solo nella filosofia aristotelica (come già era noto), ma anche nell'astronomia, e che dunque il suo interesse per questa scienza si sviluppò già nella fase poco nota della sua formazione giovanile a Costantinopoli, e non solo, come si riteneva sino ad oggi, sotto la guida di Giorgio Gemisto Pletone a Mistrà dopo il 1431.

Adresse: Dr. Alberto Bardi, Via Cipelli 4, I-43011 Busseto (PR), Italia; alberto.bardi@live.com

1 Introduzione

Gli studi su Giovanni Cortasmeno e Bessarione hanno riconosciuto per entrambi un vivo interesse per tematiche legate all'astronomia (a questi aspetti sono dedicate le sezioni 2 e 3 del presente articolo). Analisi approfondite in questo frangente, alcune già eseguite e altre tuttora in elaborazione per il primo, mancano ancora per il secondo. Nel corso di indagini sulla tradizione testuale del testo astronomico intitolato Παράδοσις εἰς τοὺς περσικοὺς κανόνας τῆς

Un doveroso ringraziamento al Dipartimento di Studi Bizantini della Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität di Monaco di Baviera, al Dipartimento I del Max Planck Institute for the History of Science di Berlino e al Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani / Deutsches Studienzentrum in Venedig per le risorse messemi a disposizione. Ringrazio Anne-Laurence Caudano e Niccolò Zorzi per i loro utili suggerimenti.

ἀστρονομίας[1] (d'ora in poi indicato come *Paradosis*) ho individuato interventi di Bessarione sul testo, i quali risultano innovativi nella cornice della tradizione testuale di quest'opera.[2] Non si tratta di composizioni originali del nostro, ma, come vedremo, esse meritano un'analisi e un commento: il presente articolo formulerà una valutazione storica e tecnica delle integrazioni di Bessarione alla *Paradosis*, un testo copiato da lui stesso e raccolto nel suo codice *Marcianus graecus* Z. 333.[3] Pertanto, al termine di una sezione utile ad un inquadramento generale dell'opera presa in considerazione (sezione 4), le integrazioni bessarionee saranno edite e analizzate nella cornice della tradizione testuale della *Paradosis*, al fine di comprendere le ragioni di questa particolare attività di trascrizione (sezioni 5 e 6).

Dato il comune interesse tra Bessarione e Cortasmeno per l'astronomia, è lecito supporre che tra i due siano intercorsi dei legami riconducibili in qualche modo a quella scienza, a maggior ragione se si considera che in età paleologa lo studio dell'astronomia era una delle materie previste nel *cursus studiorum* di quell'epoca.[4] Di ciò, tuttavia, non si trova riscontro nei dati sinora emersi nelle indagini sui due dotti di età paleologa. Le notizie su Bessarione permettono di datare i suoi studi astronomici soltanto a partire dal 1431, l'anno in cui il dotto, verosimilmente in età tra i venti e i trent'anni, si trasferì a Mistrà per seguire gli insegnamenti di Giorgio Gemisto Pletone: così si ipotizza sulla base dell'epistolario tra Pletone e Bessarione[5] e degli scritti di Niccolò Capranica e Michele Apostolis composti in occasione della morte di Bessarione (1472), i quali concordano nel ricordare la dedizione che il nostro, durante il soggiorno a Mistrà,

---

1 Traduco liberamente con "Istruzioni per le tavole astronomiche persiane".

2 La tradizione testuale è stata studiata ai fini della mia tesi di dottorato, la quale offre anche un'edizione critica del testo: A. Bardi, Persische Astronomie in Byzanz. Ein Beitrag zur Byzantinistik und zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte, tesi di dottorato discussa il 19 luglio 2017 alla Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, di prossima pubblicazione.

3 E. Mioni, Codices graeci manuscripti Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum. Vol. II. Thesaurus Antiquus. Codices 300 – 625. Roma 1985, 62 – 66.

4 Sullo studio dell'astronomia a Bisanzio vedi B. Bydén, Theodore Metochites' Stoicheiosis astronomike and the study of natural philosophy and mathematics in early palaiologan Byzantium. *Studia graeca et latina Gothoburgensia*, 66. Göteborg 2003, 216 – 262; A. Tihon, Les sciences exactes à Byzance. *Byzantion* 79 (2009) 380 – 434: 392 – 413.

5 Una lettera di Bessarione indirizzata a Pletone contiene una richiesta di aiuto in materia astronomica. Anche la risposta di Pletone è conservata. I testi sono editi come epistole 20 e 21 in L. Mohler, Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann. 3: Aus Bessarions Gelehrtenkreis. *Quellen und Forschungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte*, 24. Paderborn 1942, 463 – 468 e in A. Tihon / R. Mercier, Georges Gémiste Pléthon, Manuel d'astronomie. Louvain-la-Neuve 1998, 118 – 127.

riservava allo studio dell'astronomia. Sarebbe stato lo stesso Cortasmeno a consigliare Bessarione di recarsi a Mistrà per studiare sotto la guida di Pletone.[6] Se un rapporto maestro-allievo tra Cortasmeno e Bessarione è sicuro,[7] esso non era sinora testimoniato per quanto riguarda gli interessi astronomici. Di seguito scopriremo che gli interventi di Bessarione sulla *Paradosis* nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 permettono di stabilire con certezza che i primi studi bessarionei in campo astronomico risalgono al soggiorno a Costantinopoli alla scuola di Cortasmeno.

2 Gli interessi astronomici di Giovanni Cortasmeno

Gli studi su Giovanni Cortasmeno (1370 circa – 1431/1437) hanno messo in evidenza documenti che testimoniano il suo interesse per tematiche di matematica e di astronomia.[8] Il 1397, l'anno in cui Michele Balsamone, docente della scuola

---

6 La *Oratio in funere Bessarionis* è edita in MOHLER, Kardinal Bessarion (come sopra nota 5) 406 – 407. La *Laudatio funebris Bessarionis* di Michele Apostolis è edita in *PG* 161, CXXVIII–CXL: CXXXIII. Si vedano inoltre A. RIGO, Bessarione, Giovanni Regiomontano e i loro studi su Tolomeo a Venezia e Roma (1462 – 1464). *Studi Veneziani* 21 (1991) 49 – 110: 53 e B. TAMBRUN-KRASKER, Bessarion, de Trébizonde à Mistra: un parcours intellectuel, in C. Märtl / Ch. Kaiser / Th. Ricklin (a cura di), "Inter graecos latinissimus, inter latinos graecissimus". Bessarion zwischen den Kulturen. *Pluralisierung & Autorität*, 39. Berlin/Boston 2013, 1 – 36: 15.

7 H. HUNGER, Johannes Chortasmenons (ca. 1370–ca. 1436/37). Briefe, Gedichte und kleine Schriften. *WBS*, 7. Wien 1969, 17 – 19; M. CACOUROS, Jean Chortasménos, 'katholikos didaskalos': Contribution à l'histoire de l'enseignement à Byzance, in U. Criscuolo / R. Maisano (a cura di), Synodia: studia humanitatis Antonio Garzya septuagenario ab amicis atque discipulis dicata. Napoli 1997, 83 – 107: 98 – 102; TAMBRUN-KRASKER, Bessarion (come sopra nota 6) 7 – 15.

8 Sulla vita e le opere di Cortasmeno si rimanda a HUNGER, Johannes Chortasmenos (come sopra nota 7). Sulla sua attività scrittoria vedi anche: H. HUNGER, Johannes Chortasmenos, ein byzantinischer Intellektueller der späten Palaiologenzeit. *Wst* 70 (1957) 153 – 163. L'attività d'insegnamento di Cortasmeno è oggetto dello studio di CACOUROS, Jean Chortasmenos (come sopra nota 7). Sull'attività di copista del celebre codice Vind. Med. gr. 1, meglio noto come "Dioscoride di Vienna": E. GAMILLSCHEG, Johannes Chortasmenos als Restaurator des Wiener Dioskurides. *Biblos* 55/2 (2006) 35 – 40. Sull'attività scientifica di Cortasmeno: A.-L. CAUDANO, Le calcul de l'éclipse de soleil du 15 avril 1409 à Constantinople par Jean Chortasmenos. *Byzantion* 73 (2003) 211 – 245; F. ACERBI, Why John Chortasmenos sent Diophantus to the devil. *GRBS* 53 (2013) 379 – 389; IDEM, Byzantine recensions of Greek mathematical and astronomical texts: a survey. *Estudios bizantinos* 4 (2016) 133 – 213: 190 – 191. Sulla data di morte di Cortasmeno si veda P. SCHREINER, Zum Tod des Johannes Chortasmenos. *JÖB* 45 (1995) 219 – 222. Per un orientamento generale vedi anche *PLP* no. 30897.

patriarcale di Costantinopoli, viene ufficialmente incaricato di insegnare geometria al futuro vescovo di Selimbria, è la più antica testimonianza a noi nota circa gli studi astronomici di Cortasmeno.[9] Negli anni successivi, l'attività di Cortasmeno in campo matematico e astronomico a Costantinopoli non cessa, come mostrano i testi scientifici vergati di suo pugno nei fascicoli che andranno a formare i suoi ben noti *recueils*, vale a dire i codici Vinbob. suppl. gr. 75, Vat. Urb. gr. 80 e Vat. gr. 1059.[10] Analisi sempre più approfondite hanno permesso di comprendere il valore storico e tecnico degli interventi di Cortasmeno in manoscritti matematici e astronomici, un terreno di ricerca tuttora oggetto di studio.[11] Per menzionare alcuni casi paradigmatici, l'analisi del Matr. Bibl. Nat. 4678 rivela un Cortasmeno attento lettore dell'*Aritmetica* di Diofanto: il manoscritto contiene il noto scholion in cui l'anima di Diofanto viene mandata letteralmente al diavolo per la difficoltà dei teoremi da lui proposti.[12] Gli interventi di Cortasmeno nel Vat. gr. 1365 testimoniano un vivo interesse per la Στοιχείωσις ἀστρονομική di Teodoro Metochite, una delle opere astronomiche più significative di età paleologa.[13] I primi 157 *folia* del codice Urb. gr. 80 sono vergati da Cortasmeno e contengono diversi testi scientifici:[14] parte del *Piccolo commentario alle tavole facili di Tolomeo* di Teone Alessandrino, parte del *Commentario alle tavole facili di Tolomeo* attribuito a Stefano Alessandrino; un trattato di Isacco Argiro sulle congiunzioni e opposizioni lunisolari con calcoli esemplificativi; schemi e tavole astronomiche; un trattato di geografia basato sulla *Geografia* di Tolomeo; il primo libro dell'*Almagesto* accompagnato da scolii

---

9 J. Darrouzès, Les regestes des actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople. Paris 1970, I/6, no. 3060, 323 – 324. Su Balsamone cf. *PLP* no. 2120.

10 Per le descrizioni di questi manoscritti: P. Canart / G. Prato, Les recueils organisés par Jean Chortasménos et le problème de ses autographes, in H. Hunger (Hrsg.), Studien zum Patriarchatsregister von Konstantinopel I. *Österr. Akademie der Wiss., Philos.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsber.* 383. Wien 1981, 115 – 178.

11 Per una rassegna dettagliata degli interventi di Cortasmeno in manoscritti scientifici, sia editi sia oggetto di future indigini e meritevoli di edizione, si rimanda ad Acerbi, Byzantine recensions (come sopra nota 8) 190 – 191.

12 La corretta contestualizzazione dello scholion di Cortasmeno nel Matr. Bibl. Nat. 4678 è oggetto dell'articolo di Acerbi, John Chortasmenos (come sopra nota 8). Lo scholion si legge nel manoscritto menzionato al f. 74r marg. inf.: ἡ ψυχή σου Διόφαντε εἴη μετὰ τοῦ Σατανᾶ ἕνεκα τῆς δυσκολί(ας) τῶν τε ἄλλων σου θεωρημάτων καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῦ παρόν(τος) θεωρή(μα)τος. Testo edito in Diophanti Alexandrini opera omnia II, a cura di P. Tannery. Leipzig 1895, 260.24 – 26. Cf. A. Meskens, Travelling mathematics: the fate of Diophantos' arithmetic. Basel 2010, per un orientamento generale sull'opera di Diofanto.

13 Hunger, Johannes Chortasmenos (come sopra nota 7) 15 e 24 – 25. Su Metochite e la sua opera astronomica cf. Bydén, Theodoros Metochites (come sopra nota 4).

14 Canart/Prato, Les recueils (come sopra nota 10) 132 – 145 per la descrizione del codice.

costituiti da porzioni testuali riprese dai commentari di Teodosio, Proclo, Teone e Teodoro Metochite;[15] estratti di matematica e tavole astronomiche basati su Tolomeo.[16] Il Vindob. suppl. gr. 75 contiene, oltre a parte della corrispondenza di Cortasmeno e testi poetici, retorici e filosofici, trattati astronomici di Isacco Argiro.[17] Il Vat. gr. 1059 è vergato interamente da Cortasmeno e contiene un numero considerevole di testi scientifici.[18] Ai fini di questo lavoro è opportuno soffermarsi su questo testimonio. Tra i testi raccolti in questo codice si riscontrano calcoli astronomici per gli anni 1408/9, 1409/10, 1411 e 1412, tavole sulla durata delle ore giornaliere calibrate sulla latitudine di Costantinopoli, scolii di Isacco Argiro sulla *Geografia* di Tolomeo, l'*Hypotyposis* di Proclo, il trattato di Giovanni Filopono sulla costruzione e l'utilizzo dell'astrolabio, il trattato sull'astrolabio di Argiro, i due trattati dello stesso sulle cosiddette tavole nuove e quelli sui cicli lunisolari e sulla data di Pasqua; la *Geografia* di Tolomeo, la *Tribiblos* di Teodoro Meliteniote, la versione greca delle *Tavole alfonsine* ad opera di Demetrio Crisolora, estratti dal commentario di Stefano Alessandrino, dal commentario di Teone alle *Tavole facili* e dall'*Almagesto*, corredati di scolii e calcoli esemplificativi. Infine, calcoli di congiunzioni e opposizioni lunisolari ed eclissi ad opera di Cortasmeno, tra i quali un calcolo di un'eclissi solare per il 15 aprile 1409.[19]

Svariati sono i punti che meritano attenzione nello studio del Vat. gr. 1059, a partire dalla *mise en page*. Essa prevede molto spesso una disposizione del testo su due colonne, in modo da permettere la lettura a fronte di capitoli teorici e di quelli pratici ad essi corrispondenti nei trattati astronomici trascritti. Tali trattati sono spesso oggetto di una considerevole riorganizzazione strutturale: emblematico il caso della trascrizione della Ἀστρονομικὴ Τρίβιβλος (ff. 228 – 447) di Teodoro Meliteniote.[20] Si tratta di un manuale per l'utilizzo di tavole astronomiche di Tolomeo (oggetto dei libri I e II)[21] e di tavole di astronomi persiani (libro

15 I. Ševčenko, Études sur la polémique entre Théodore Métochite et Nicéphore Choumnos. *Corpus Bruxellense historiae byzantinae, Subsidia* 3. Bruxelles 1962, 281.
16 A. Tihon, Le 'Petit Commentaire' de Théon d'Alexandrie aux Tables Faciles de Ptolémée. *Studi e Testi*, 282. Città del Vaticano 1978, 126 – 127; Canart/Prato, Les recueils (come sopra nota 10) 132 – 146.
17 Canart/Prato, Les recueils (come sopra nota 10) 120 – 125 per la descrizione del manoscritto.
18 Tihon, Petit Commentaire (come sopra nota 16) 127 – 131 per il contenuto del codice; Canart/Prato, Les recueils (come sopra nota 10) 125 – 131 per la descrizione codicologica e paleografica.
19 Caudano, Le calcul (come sopra nota 8) 223 – 245 per l'analisi del calcolo.
20 *PLP* no. 17851.

III).[22] Cortasmeno non si limita a copiare il testo dall'autografo di Meliteniote, il Vat. gr. 792,[23] ma inserisce all'interno di esso sia alcune tavole astronomiche, tra i capitoli ad esse pertinenti, sia porzioni testuali del *Piccolo commentario alle tavole facili di Tolomeo* di Teone alessandrino, in corrispondenza dei capitoli analoghi del Meliteniote.[24] Cortasmeno, a completamento dell'operazione di confronto, ai ff. 540 – 544v, organizza una sinossi in tre colonne, assegnando a ciascuna di esse rispettivamente la teoria del capitolo di Teone Alessandrino sulle congiunzioni e opposizioni lunisolari, la parte pratica del medesimo capitolo e la parte pratica del capitolo analogo di Meliteniote.[25]

Gli studi codicologici sul Vat. gr. 1059 e le date attestate dai calcoli eseguiti da Cortasmeno hanno permesso di datare il codice ed individuarne l'ambiente di allestimento. Le date dei calcoli hanno come estremi gli anni 1403 e 1413 e sono impostate sulle coordinate di Costantinopoli. Di conseguenza è stato possibile datare il codice a quel periodo e, fondandosi sull'attività d'insegnamento di Cortasmeno in quegli anni, accertarne l'allestimento in ambiente costantinopolitano. Le note autografe e i calcoli contenuti nel codice vaticano mostrano lo spiccato interesse di Cortasmeno per le tematiche astronomiche. Sulla base dell'organizzazione del contenuto e dell'impaginazione del codice, Anne-Laurence Caudano ha ipotizzato che esso sia stato allestito a scopo didattico.[26] L'ipotesi è confermata da dati testuali interni al codice, come la nota che invita il lettore a soffermarsi su certi calcoli piuttosto che su altri (f. 586v): Ἕως ὧδε βλέπε καὶ ἐξέταζε τὰς ψηφοφορίας εἰ θέλεις φιλοπόνως ἀνερευνᾶν καὶ ἀνευρίσκειν τὴν ἀκρίβειαν διὰ πλειόνων ὑποδειγμάτων· τὰ δὲ πλείω τούτων εἰσὶ περιττά· ἐδισσεύθησαν γὰρ ἀκριβέστερον ἐν τοῖς ὄπισθεν μεταγραφέντα.[27]

---

21 L'edizione dei libri I e II in R. Leurquin (éd.), Théodore Méliténiote. Tribiblos Astronomique. Livre I, Amsterdam 1990; R. Leurquin (a cura di), Théodore Méliténiote. Tribiblos Astronomique. Livre II. Amsterdam 1993.

22 Il testo del libro III è edito in Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2). Un'indagine sulle possibili fonti persiane di questo trattato è in corso, condotta da Sajjad Nikfahm-Khubravan (McGill University) e da me. Un'edizione parziale del libro III era già disponibile in una tesi, non pubblicata, ma la risorsa è rimasta inaccessibile nonostante ripetute richieste: J.-P. Pêcheur, Le Tribiblos Astronomique de Théodore Méliténiote. Édition, traduction et commentaires des chapitres 1 à 12 du livre III. Mémoire de licence dactylographié, Louvain 1973.

23 Descrizione del codice in R. Leurquin, Un manuscrit autographe de la Tribiblos Astronomique de Théodore Méliténiote: Le Vaticanus graecus 792. *Scriptorium* 45 (1991) 145 – 162.

24 Tihon, 'Petit Commentaire' (come sopra nota 16) 128 – 129.

25 ibid. 129.

26 Caudano, Le calcul (come sopra nota 8) 215 – 218.

27 Testo edito in Tihon, 'Petit Commentaire' (come sopra nota 16) 130 n. 4.

L'attività scientifica di Cortasmeno testimoniata dai codici ora elencati, si connette verosimilmente alla sua attività di insegnamento. Nonostante la scarsità di dati utili a ricostruirla, Michel Cacouros è riuscito a dimostrare che Cortasmeno ricoprì probabilmente il ruolo di professore della scuola patriarcale (καθολικὸς διδάσκαλος) tra il 1407 e il 1425. In quel periodo, dunque, Cortasmeno, in virtù della carica assunta, avrà istruito nelle materie del *trivium* e del *quadrivium* i figli di famiglie facoltose di Costantinopoli.[28] Sicuramente tra i suoi allievi in quegli anni ci furono Marco Eugenico,[29] Giorgio Scolario[30] e Bessarione.[31] Su quest'ultimo si concentra la sezione successiva.

3 Gli interessi astronomici di Bessarione

Come nel caso di Cortasmeno, nell'attività di Bessarione (1400/1408 – 1472) quale è testimoniata in vario modo nei suoi codici si riscontra un particolare interesse per le discipline scientifiche e in particolare astronomiche.[32] Gli studi bessarionei, infatti, hanno messo in luce sia l'ingente numero di manoscritti scientifici in suo possesso sia le note e le trascrizioni di suo pugno di testi matematici e astronomici; tuttavia, a differenza degli studi sugli interessi astronomici di Cortasmeno, manca ancora un'analisi approfondita del valore storico e tecnico

---

28 Sulla ricostruzione dell'attività d'insegnamento di Cortasmeno e sull'organizzazione del sapere scolastico bizantino vedi Cacouros, Jean Chortasmenos (come sopra nota 7).

29 *PLP* 3 no. 6193.

30 *PLP* no. 27304.

31 Hunger, Johannes Chortasmenos (come sopra nota 7) 17 – 19; Tambrun-Krasker, Bessarion (come sopra nota 6) 12 – 15.

32 Su Bessarione sono fondamentali L. Mohler, Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann, 1 – 3. Paderborn (1923 – 1942); E. Mioni, Bessarione bibliofilo e filologo. *RSBN* 5 (1968) 61 – 83; G. Fiaccadori (a cura di), Bessarione e l'umanesimo. Catalogo della mostra: Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 27 aprile – 31 maggio 1994. Napoli 1994; Märtl/Kaiser/Ricklin, "Inter graecos latinissimus " (come sopra nota 6). Sugli interessi astronomici del dotto: Rigo, Bessarione (come sopra nota 6); M. Zorzi, Bessarion's scientific manuscripts, now in the Marcian Library, in G. Vlachakis (a cura di), Βυζάντιο–Βενετία–Νεώτερος Ελληνισμός. Μια περιπλάνηση στον κόσμο της ελληνικής επιστημονικής σκέψης. Πρακτικά συνεδρίου, Αθήνα 7 – 9 Νοεμβρίου 2003. Athena 2004, 13 – 22. Vedi anche B. Mondrain, Le cardinal Bessarion et la constitution de sa collection de manuscrits grecs – ou comment contribuer à l'intégration du patrimoine littéraire grec et byzantin en Occident, in Märtl/Kaiser/Ricklin (come sopra) 187 – 202. Riguardo alle ipotesi sulla data di nascita cf. la sintesi di Tambrun-Krasker, Bessarion (come sopra nota 6) 7 – 10.

di testi (o di interventi su testi) di argomento scientifico a opera del dotto.[33] In questo campo di studi sono disponibili esaurienti descrizioni paleografiche e contenutistiche dei manoscritti scientifici di Bessarione e considerazioni sulla sua iniziativa di patrocinare l'astronomo Johannes Müller detto Regiomontano nella disputa contro Giorgio Trapezunzio.[34] Nelle indagini sui rapporti tra Bessarione e Regiomontano, grazie a uno studio di Antonio Rigo pubblicato nel 1991, sono emersi dati importanti sugli interessi scientifici del primo: egli aiutò concretamente l'astronomo tedesco nella comprensione del greco dell'*Almagesto*, quindi nella composizione della *Epitoma Almagesti*. Oltre ad aver sostenuto l'opera di Regiomontano, Bessarione è il dedicatario di un astrolabio, progettato e costruito dall'astronomo tedesco. Nessun dato, al contrario, permette di ipotizzare che Bessarione avesse in progetto di costruire un astrolabio, come invece sostenuto in passato.[35]

All'interno della collezione dei manoscritti di Bessarione, come accennato, si riscontrano numerosi codici con testi scientifici, alcuni dei quali trascritti da lui stesso, elencati qui di seguito, senza pretese di esaustività.[36] Nel Marc. gr. Z. 302 (coll. 730) sono di suo pugno gli *Elementi* di Euclide, i *Prolegomena ad Euclidis Data* di Marino di Neapoli, i *Data* di Euclide, i primi tre libri degli *Sphaerica* di Teodosio, i *Phaenomena* di Euclide, la *Logistica* di Barlaam di Seminara e l'*Almagesto* di Tolomeo.[37] Anche i fascicoli finali del Marc. gr. Z. 310 (coll. 301) sono vergati da Bessarione, il quale riporta il commento di Nicola Cabasila al terzo libro dell'*Almagesto* e il *Trattato sulle eclissi solari degli anni*

---

33 Nell'ultima pubblicazione su Bessarione, cioè Märtl/Kaiser/Ricklin, "Inter graecos latinissimus" (come sopra nota 32), sono assenti contributi sugli interessi scientifici del Cardinale.

34 Sui rapporti tra Bessarione e Regiomontano si rimanda allo studio di Rigo, Bessarione (come sopra nota 6). Su Giorgio Trapezunzio: J. Monfasani, George of Trebizond. A biography and a study of his rhetoric and logic. Leiden 1976; idem, Collectanea Trapezuntiana. Texts, documents, and bibliographies of George of Trebizond. Binghamton / New York 1984. Su Regiomontano sono fondamentali: E. Zinner, Leben und Wirken des Joh. Müller von Königsberg, genannt Regiomontanus. Osnabrück 1968; G. Hamann (Hrsg.), Regiomontanus-Studien. Wien 1980.

35 Sull'astrolabio di Regiomontano si veda D. King / G. L'Estrange Turner, The astrolabe dedicated to Cardinal Bessarion by Regiomontanus in 1462, in Fiaccadori, Bessarione e l'umanesimo (come sopra nota 32) 341–367. Sull'iniziativa di Bessarione di progettare un astrolabio cf. S. Bernardinello, Bessarione riassume la Fisica di Aristotele, in: Scritti in onore di Carlo Diano. Bologna 1975, 25–42: 27.

36 Per le descrizioni dei manoscritti menzionati e l'identificazione della mano di Bessarione cf. Mioni, Codices graeci (come sopra nota 3).

37 Il Marc. gr. Z. 302 è copia del Marc. gr. Z. 301. Si veda in proposito F. Acerbi / S. Martinelli Tempesta / B. Vitrac, Gli interventi autografi di Giorgio Gemisto Pletone nel codice matematico Marc. gr. Z. 301. *Segno e Testo* 14 (2016) 411–456: 414 nota 9.

1333 e 1337 di Barlaam di Seminara. Annotazioni di Bessarione sono presenti nei codici Marc. gr. Z. 304 (coll. 731), Marc. gr. Z. 312 (coll. 710), Marc. gr. Z. 316 (coll. 670). Il primo contiene gli *Optica* di Euclide, il *De sphaera mota* e il *De ortibus et occasibus* di Autolico, il *De habitationibus* e il *De diebus et noctibus* di Teodosio, il *De magnitudinis et distantiis solis et lunae* di Aristarco e l'*Anaphoricus* di Ipsicle. Il secondo contiene l'*Almagesto* di Tolomeo; il terzo l'*Aritmetica* di Nicomaco con il commentario di Filopono.

Il codice Marc. gr. Z. 333 – su cui si concentra il mio lavoro – è vergato quasi interamente da Bessarione, come già riconobbe Mioni.[38] Tra i testi scientifici trascritti nei fascicoli che compongono il codice si leggono un trattato di Isacco Argiro sull'estrazione della radice quadrata, le *Observationes in musicam* di Pediasimo, gli *Arithmetica* di Nicomaco con il commentario di Asclepio di Tralle, due raccolte di scolii agli *Elementi*, i *Caelestia* di Cleomede, un manuale per l'uso di tavole astronomiche persiane (la *Paradosis*), un trattato di Argiro sui cicli solari e lunari, una serie strutturata di tavole astronomiche persiane e metodi per la costruzione e l'utilizzo dell'astrolabio.

Il Marc. gr. Z. 333 si data alla prima metà del secolo XV sulla base di dati codicologici e testuali: le numerose filigrane rilevate da Mioni orientano per una datazione tra il 1400 e il 1440; al f. Iv Bessarione riporta una tavola con comparazioni di sistemi cronologici tra gli estremi degli anni 1441 e 1452; ai ff. 205 e 230 due note a margine si riferiscono al 1446; nei fogli finali del primo fascicolo (ff. 7v–8v, attualmente inseriti dopo il foglio di guardia) Bessarione pone degli epigrammi e delle lettere composti in occasione della morte di Pletone (26 giugno 1452). Questi ultimi sono paratesti aggiunti nei fogli rimasti bianchi del primo fascicolo, dunque la loro composizione non impedisce di ipotizzare che le unità principali del codice siano state allestite al più tardi negli anni '40. La datazione del codice, in base alle considerazioni filologiche esposte più avanti, va circoscritta agli anni '20, quando Bessarione era a Costantinopoli alla scuola

---

38 Secondo Mioni una mano ulteriore si riscontra a partire dal f. 282v: Mioni, Codices graeci (come sopra nota 3) 61–66. Per la mano di Bessarione cf. D. Harlfinger, Specimina griechischer Kopisten der Renaissance. I. Griechen des 15. Jahrhunderts. Berlin 1974, 26–27 e tavv. 50–52; E. Gamillscheg / D. Harlfinger, Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten (RGK) 800–1600. I. Handschriften aus Bibliotheken Großbritanniens. Wien 1981, no. 41; E. Gamillscheg / D. Harlfinger, RGK II. Handschriften aus Bibliotheken Frankreichs und Nachträge zu den Bibliotheken Großbritanniens. Wien 1989, no. 61; E. Gamillscheg / D. Harlfinger / P. Eleuteri, RGK III. Handschriften aus Bibliotheken Roms mit dem Vatikan. Wien 1997, no. 77; P. Eleuteri / P. Canart, Scrittura greca nell'Umanesimo italiano. Milano 1991, 128–131, no. L. Vedi anche la scheda sul Marc. gr. Z. 333 curata da P. Eleuteri in Fiaccadori, Bessarione e l'umanesimo (come sopra nota 32) 409–410.

di Cortasmeno, o al massimo, meno verosimilmente, all'inizio degli anni '30, quando era a Mistrà con Pletone.

Gli interventi innovativi sulla *Paradosis* riguardano il testo che Bessarione trascrive ai ff. 146r–176v, intitolato Παράδοσις εἰς τοὺς περσικοὺς προχείρους κανόνας τῆς ἀστρονομίας. La rassegna delle caratteristiche generali di questo testo astronomico sarà oggetto della sezione successiva, in vista dell'analisi e della valutazione delle integrazioni che Bessarione apporta al testo.

4 Caratteristiche generali della *Paradosis*

La *Paradosis* è un manuale di istruzioni per l'uso di un sistema di tavole astronomiche elaborato nella metà del XIII secolo in Persia, poi introdotto a Bisanzio nella prima metà del secolo successivo.[39] Le tavole astronomiche, come è noto, per essere utilizzate necessitano di un manuale di istruzioni, senza il quale sono difficili da utilizzare.[40] Una serie di tavole astronomiche è un'esposizione di dati numerici, strutturata in formato tabellare e organizzata coerentemente secondo parametri di modelli geometrici sviluppati precedentemente in accordo a un sistema di riferimento. Entro questi limiti, l'uso corretto delle tavole permette di calcolare le posizioni dei corpi celesti in un momento determinato (anno, mese, giorno e ora) e in un determinato luogo geografico. Pertanto i dati forniti dalle tavole devono essere combinati tra loro caso per caso attraverso serie specifiche di operazioni matematiche. Ad eccezione del titolo della tavola e dei titoli di caselle interne alla tavola – per esempio i nomi dei pianeti e indicazioni cronologiche –, le tavole sono composte interamente di numeri. Per utenti ignari dei modelli su cui si basano le tavole, dunque, è difficile scegliere quali tavole utilizzare in accordo ad un determinato obiettivo, quali valori combinare e in quale successione di operazioni.

Le tavole astronomiche, come accennato, sono calcolate a partire da un sistema di riferimento. Dall'età ellenistica fino all'età moderna il riferimento era

---

39 A. Tihon, L'astronomie byzantine à l'aube de la Renaissance. *Byzantion* 66 (1996) 244–280 per un'introduzione generale sull'astronomia in età paleologa; A. Tihon, Les tables astronomiques persanes à Constantinople dans la première moitié du XIVe siècle. *Byzantion* 57 (1987) 471–487 sull'introduzione delle tavole astronomiche persiane a Bisanzio.

40 Questa introduzione riprende dati ricavati da: O. Neugebauer, A history of ancient mathematical astronomy, part 2, in idem, A history of ancient mathematical astronomy, 1–3. Berlin 1975, 942–1026; F. Acerbi, Funzioni e modalità di trasmissione delle notazioni numeriche nella trattatistica matematica greca: due esempi paradigmatici. *Segno e Testo* 11 (2013) 125–129.

costituito dal modello cosmologico illustrato nei tredici libri dell'*Almagesto* di Tolomeo, che sopravvisse fino al XVII secolo, anche oltre la cosiddetta rivoluzione copernicana del secolo XVI.[41] Lo studio dell'*Almagesto* e delle tavole astronomiche contenute all'interno dei suoi capitoli offre gli strumenti per determinare le posizioni del sole, della luna e dei pianeti, e di prevedere i fenomeni celesti per gli anni a venire. Non solo, l'opera tolemaica illustra come costruire tavole atte a calcolare, appunto, posizioni di corpi celesti e a prevedere fenomeni celesti, presentandone anche di già costruite. Tali tavole, però, risultarono di difficile utilizzo. Di conseguenza Tolomeo redasse una nuova opera, le cosiddette *Tavole facili*,[42] che consiste in una versione semplificata delle tavole astronomiche estratte dall'*Almagesto*. In seguito il matematico Teone alessandrino (IV secolo) redasse due commentari alle *Tavole facili*, ai quali la tradizione assegnò i titoli di "Grande Commentario" e di "Piccolo Commentario".[43] Il primo ha come oggetto la spiegazione di come si possono ricavare le tavole facili dalle tavole dall'*Almagesto*; il secondo, più semplicemente, insegna come utilizzare le *Tavole facili*. Quest'ultima opera, data la maggior facilità di comprensione, conobbe una vasta fortuna nei secoli successivi e divenne il modello per tutti i commentari di tavole astronomiche dei secoli a venire,[44] vuoi della tradizione greca, vuoi della tradizione araba e persiana,[45] così come per la *Paradosis*.

A questo punto viene da chiedersi per quale motivo fosse necessario redigere nuovi commentari, quando si aveva già a disposizione il manuale di Teone. Le *Tavole facili* di Tolomeo già di per sé costituiscono una versione semplificata dei

---

41 Edizione critica dell'Almagesto: J. L. Heiberg (ed.), Claudii Ptolemaei opera quae exstant omnia: Syntaxis mathematica. Lipsia 1898 – 1903. Si rimanda ad O. Pedersen / A. Jones, A survey of the Almagest with annotation and new commentary. New York 2011 per la tradizione e il contenuto dell'opera; G. J. Toomer, Ptolemy's Almagest. Princeton NJ 1998 per la migliore traduzione in una lingua moderna (inglese).

42 Edizione delle Tavole facili: A. Tihon / R. Mercier (eds.), Πτολεμαίου Πρόχειροι κανόνες. *Publications de l' Institut Orientaliste de Louvain*, 59. 2 vol. Louvain-La-Neuve 2011.

43 Edizione del Grande Commentario: J. Mogenet / A. Tihon (eds.), Le 'Grand Commentaire' aux Tables Faciles de Théon d'Alexandrie aux Tables Faciles de Ptolémée. Livre I. *Studi e testi*, 315. Roma 1985; A. Tihon, Le 'Grand Commentaire' de Théon d'Alexandrie aux Tables Faciles de Ptolémée. Livres II et III. *Studi e testi*, 340. Roma 1991; A. Tihon, Le 'Grand Commentaire' de Théon d'Alexandrie aux Tables Faciles de Ptolémée. Livre IV. *Studi e testi*, 390. Roma 1999. Edizione del Piccolo Commentario: Tihon, 'Petit Commentaire' (come sopra nota 16).

44 La tradizione manoscritta del Piccolo Commentario è descritta e studiata ibid., 13 – 192. Si veda anche Acerbi, Byzantine recensions (come sopra nota 8) 177 – 179.

45 Sui manuali per l'uso delle tavole astronomiche della tradizione araba e persiana si vedano: E. S. Kennedy, A survey of Islamical astronomical tables. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 46/2 (1956) 123 – 177; D. A. King / J. Samsó, Astronomical handbooks and tables from the Islamic world (750 – 1900): an interim report. *Suhayl* 2 (2001) 12 – 105.

modelli proposti nell'*Almagesto*; tali modelli geometrici – oggi sappiamo – non erano esatti ed erano stati sviluppati a loro volta sulla base dello studio di dati frutto di osservazioni celesti dell'antichità. Tuttavia, i dati osservativi non potevano raggiungere livelli di precisione paragonabili a quelli odierni. Per questi motivi, dopo un certo periodo di tempo, i risultati ricavabili utilizzando le *Tavole facili* sono in evidente contrasto con i dati osservativi. Per ovviare a questo problema l'astronomia di tradizione islamica (araba e persiana), che a partire dal secolo IX aveva tradotto e studiato Tolomeo, aveva sviluppato correzioni e innovazioni per i modelli tolemaici. Quest'attività, frutto di lavoro in osservatori astronomici, ebbe come risultato la produzione di tavole astronomiche aggiornate.[46]

Nella Bisanzio di età paleologa, per ottenere tavole aggiornate, ci si rivolse a tradizioni di studi astronomici che avevano aggiornato Tolomeo, ad esempio quella degli astronomi attivi in Persia. Una volta tradotte le tavole astronomiche non greche, occorreva scriverne un manuale di istruzioni. La *Paradosis* costituisce una risposta a questa esigenza.

La tradizione testuale della *Paradosis* è caratterizzata da fenomeni tipici di un testo d'uso bizantino di larga diffusione.[47] Essa è tràdita come opera a circolazione indipendente e come terzo libro della Τρίβιβλος ἀστρονομική (di seguito *Tribiblos*) di Teodoro Meliteniote.[48] La prima è trasmessa da 24 testimoni manoscritti ed è anonima, anche se alcuni testimoni riportano attribuzioni a Isacco Argiro e a Giorgio Crisococca. Quest'ultimo non è certamente l'autore della *Paradosis*, ma di un altro trattato sulle tavole persiane.[49] Le notevoli so-

---

46 Sull'astronomia araba e persiana: G. Saliba, Islamic science and the making of European Renaissance. Cambridge MA 2007; idem, Islamic reception of Greek astronomy. *Proceedings of the International Astronomical Union Symposium* 260/5 (2009). Cambridge 2011, 149 – 165; J. Chabás, Aspects of Arabic influence on astronomical tables in medieval Europe. *Suhayl* 13 (2014) 23 – 40; N. Sidoli / G. Van Brummelen, From Alexandreia, through Bagdad: surveys and studies in the ancient Greek and medieval Islamic mathematical sciences in Honor of J. L. Berggren. Berlin/Heidelberg 2014.

47 Studio della tradizione testuale ed edizione critica della Paradosis: Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2). Un caso paradigmatico di trasmissione manoscritta di un testo d'uso in età bizantino è il Piccolo Commentario di Teone, per cui cf. Tihon, 'Petit Commentaire' (come sopra nota 16) 13 – 192; Acerbi, Byzantine recensions (come sopra nota 8) 177 – 179.

48 Per un'introduzione esauriente alla Tribiblos vedi R. Leurquin, La Tribiblos Astronomique de Théodore Méliténiote (Vat. gr. 792). *Janus* 72 (1985) 257 – 282. Edizione critica dei libri I e II: Leurquin, Tribiblos Livre I–II (come sopra nota 21); edizione del libro III in appendice a Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2).

49 A. Tihon, Tables islamiques à Byzance. *Byzantion* 60 (1990) 401 – 425: 418 – 419. Attualmente sto effettuando un'indagine sui testimoni dell'opera di Crisococca a fini di edizione critica.

miglianze testuali tra la *Paradosis* e il terzo libro della *Tribiblos* hanno inizialmente fatto ipotizzare un caso di plagio tra Argiro e Meliteniote o viceversa;[50] successivamente si è rimasti nell'incertezza se attribuirla ad Argiro o considerarla come la bozza del terzo libro della *Tribiblos* di Meliteniote.[51] Quest'ultimo, come scoprì Mercati, è senza dubbio l'autore della redazione di cui è stato rintracciato il testimone autografo nel Vat. gr. 792.[52] Il confronto tra la *Paradosis* e il libro III di Meliteniote mi ha permesso di individuare nella *Paradosis* uno stadio di composizione precedente all'opera di Meliteniote, la quale risulta una versione rielaborata dell'opera originaria. Di conseguenza Meliteniote, in riferimento al libro III, agisce come copista redattore. Recentemente, nel testimone più antico della *Paradosis*, ai ff. 2r–17r del manoscritto *Laurentianus pluteus* 28.13,[53] è stata riconosciuta da Brigitte Mondrain proprio la mano di Argiro.[54] Tuttavia il titolo dell'opera al f. 2r è semplicemente παράδοσις εἰς τοὺς περσικοὺς κανόνας τῆς ἀστρονομίας. La *Paradosis* è adespota, ma Argiro è certamente colui che ha copiato il testimone della *Paradosis* più vicino all'originale, composto, sulla base di dati interni al codice, tra il 1352 e il 1374.[55]

La *Paradosis* è costituita da un insieme di brevi capitoli spesso completamente indipendenti tra loro; l'assegnare ad uno di essi, all'interno della serie dei capitoli, una posizione piuttosto che un'altra, non comporta variazioni alla coerenza interna complessiva dell'opera (ad eccezione del primo capitolo, un'introduzione valida per tutto il resto dell'opera). Ciò favorisce quei processi che caratterizzano la trasmissione dei testi d'uso, cioè contaminazioni, interpola-

---

50 L. H. Gray, Zu den byzantinischen Angaben über den altiranischen Kalender. *BZ* 11 (1902) 468–472: 469.

51 Il contributo più recente, in cui Meliteniote è considerato l'autore della Paradosis, è del 2009: Tihon, Les sciences (come sopra nota 4) 406.

52 Il manoscritto fu scoperto dal cardinal Mercati: G. Mercati, Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia e della letteratura bizantina del secolo XIV. Città del Vaticano 1931, 174–179. Si vedano anche Leurquin, La Tribiblos (come sopra nota 48) e Leurquin, Un manuscrit (come sopra nota 23).

53 Descrizione più recente del Laur. plut. 28.13 in S. Gentile, Pico e la biblioteca medicea privata, in P. Viti (a cura di), Pico, Poliziano e l'Umanesimo di fine Quattrocento. Firenze (1994) 93–94 (con bibliografia anteriore). Si veda anche, sebbene datato, A. Olivieri (ed.) Catalogus codicum astrologorum graecorum I. Bruxelles (1898) 6–11.

54 B. Mondrain, La lecture et la copie de textes scientifiques à Byzance pendant l'époque Paléologue, in G. De Gregorio (a cura di), La produzione scritta tecnica e scientifica nel medioevo: Libro e documento tra scuole e professioni. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio dell'Associazione italiana dei Paleografi e Diplomatisti, Fisciano–Salerno, 28–30 settembre 2009. *Studi e Ricerche*, 5. Spoleto 2012, 607–632: 630.

55 Cf. nota 53.

zioni, spostamenti e arricchimenti del materiale. Di conseguenza, le filiazioni tra i manoscritti della *Paradosis* sono state per buona parte stabilite sulla base di macrovarianti (ad es. l'ordine dei capitoli o lunghe porzioni di testo all'interno dei capitoli), e solo in alcuni casi la ricostruzione dei rapporti tra manoscritti si è fondata sull'esame delle (micro)varianti testuali vere e proprie.

Nella *Paradosis*, e nei testi aggiunti a essa da Bessarione, si riscontrano alcuni tratti stilistici tipici della tradizione di testi matematici greci, caratteristiche linguistico-stilistiche che verranno considerate nel dettaglio nelle sezioni 5 e 6, beneficiando delle linee interpretative e della terminologia proposte in uno studio di Fabio Acerbi.[56] Si può accennare già da ora che i testi della *Paradosis* sono contraddistinti dal "linguaggio delle procedure" e dal "linguaggio degli algoritmi": entrambi hanno lo scopo di descrivere catene di operazioni, con la differenza che il primo mira al massimo grado di generalità, mentre il secondo trova impiego in casi particolari e trova nella procedura la propria giustificazione: questo è il legame tra i due linguaggi. Nei manuali per l'uso delle tavole, il linguaggio algoritmico è sistematicamente utilizzato per l'applicazione delle istruzioni esposte nelle procedure in un calcolo paradigmatico. Si tratta di un dato essenziale per comprendere il valore delle aggiunte bessarionee, che verrà ripreso e approfondito più avanti in occasione dell'analisi dei passi (sezioni 5 e 6).

Ciascun capitolo della *Paradosis* ha una struttura ben definita, già individuabile nel suo modello, cioè il *Piccolo commentario* di Teone: la prima parte di un capitolo consiste in un'esposizione teorica dell'uso delle tavole secondo il tema specificato nel titolo del capitolo; segue una parte pratica, intitolata ὑπόδειγμα, dove i metodi di calcolo illustrati nella parte precedente vengono applicati ad un esempio; nella terza parte, intitolata spesso ψηφοφορία oppure ἔκθεσις τῶν ἀριθμῶν, viene proposto un calcolo paradigmatico in forma tabellare o, più raramente, discorsivo, ma in alcuni casi in entrambi i formati; tale calcolo presenta gli stessi parametri del metodo esposto nella seconda parte. La terza parte, come si vedrà, è un supplemento alla seconda; a volte si aggiungono ulteriori calcoli basati sul metodo esposto nella seconda parte, ma basati su dati cronologici differenti, cioè per una data più recente rispetto a quella utilizzata solitamente nei capitoli dell'opera. Il "linguaggio delle procedure" contraddistingue la prima e la seconda parte dei capitoli della *Paradosis* e, come si vedrà

---

56 Le caratteristiche fondamentali dei linguaggi della matematica greca sono state individuate e analizzate da Fabio Acerbi. Si rimanda pertanto al suo studio fondamentale: F. Acerbi, I codici stilistici della matematica greca: dimostrazioni, procedure, algoritmi. *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 130 (2012) 167–214.

tra breve, la prima delle aggiunte di Bessarione alla *Paradosis* (oggetto di studio nella sezione successiva). Il "linguaggio degli algoritmi" invece caratterizza la terza parte dei capitoli della *Paradosis* e la seconda innovazione bessarionea (verrà trattato nella sezione 6).

5 L'aggiunta al capitolo sulle congiunzioni e opposizioni lunisolari

Come si è detto, Bessarione è il copista della *Paradosis* nel Marc. gr. Z. 333, ff. 146r–176v. Nella sua trascrizione si riscontrano due innovazioni strutturali: la prima, oggetto di questa sezione, è attestata in altri sei testimoni della *Paradosis*. Si tratta di un'aggiunta a un capitolo che tratta della determinazione di congiunzioni e opposizioni lunisolari,[57] intitolato περὶ συνοδικῶν καὶ πανσεληνιακῶν συζυγιῶν, un capitolo canonico della *Paradosis*, cioè comune all'intera tradizione manoscritta. L'altra innovazione, invece, consiste nell'inserimento all'interno dell'opera del testo intitolato τεχνολογία ἀκριβὴς περὶ τῆς ὥρας συνόδου ἢ πανσελήνου (di seguito τεχνολογία), dal tema affine al capitolo canonico menzionato. Quest'ultima innovazione caratterizza parte di una famiglia testuale della *Paradosis*, il cui capostipite è il Marc. gr. Z. 323 (coll. 639), seguito dai testimoni qui elencati: Marc. gr. Z. 328 (coll. 519), Marc. gr. Z. 333, Marc. gr. Z. 336 (coll. 646), Oxon. Barocc. 58, Lincop. kl. f. 10, Par. gr. 2501, Vat. gr. 1047, Vat. gr. 1058.[58] Ora, quattro testimoni dell'aggiunta di Bessarione (il Voss. gr. Qº 44, il Lincop. kl. f. 10, l'Oxon. Burneianus 91 e il Vat. gr 1852) la riportano come facente parte del capitolo canonico περὶ συνοδικῶν καὶ πανσεληνιακῶν συζυγιῶν, mentre il Marc. gr. Z. 333 la pone di seguito alla τεχνολογία, adottando una soluzione unica in tutta la tradizione della *Paradosis*, che di seguito è analizzata in dettaglio. Al f. 163v Bessarione comincia a copiare l'aggiunta nella stessa posizione in cui è riportata negli altri quattro manoscritti, ma si arresta dopo cinque righe nel mezzo di una frase e scrive nel margine, in rosso: ζήτει σαφεστέραν μέθοδον ἑτέραν περὶ τῶν ὡρῶν μετὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς μεθόδου ταύτης καὶ τοῦ ὑποδείγματος ἔνθα ἂν εὕροις τουτὶ τὸ σημεῖον Θ.[59] Tale segno, infatti, si

57 Per una descrizione tecnica delle congiunzioni ed opposizioni lunisolari cf. Neugebauer, History (come sopra nota 40) 1, 118–124 e Pedersen/Jones, Survey (come sopra nota 41) 221–226.
58 Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2) per una rassegna esaustiva dei processi innescati dalle macrovarianti.
59 Per la precisione il segno è un cerchio con quattro puntini all'interno.

rintraccia successivamente nel margine del f. 167v, preceduto da una annotazione, in rosso come la precedente: τοῦτο ἔστι[60] τὸ ζητούμενον ὄπισθεν ἔνθα σημεῖον τουτὶ Θ. In corrispondenza di tale annotazione Bessarione trascrive la τεχνολογία e, al termine di essa, ricomincia a copiare dall'inizio l'aggiunta, dandone questa volta una versione compiuta, alla quale appone il titolo εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ. Nei codici in cui l'aggiunta è copiata, assieme alla τεχνολογία, direttamente dal Marc. gr. Z. 333, vale a dire il Marc. gr. Z. 336 (f. 6r) e il Vat. gr. 1047 (f. 53v), il titolo con attribuzione autoriale è assente.

Il titolo εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ apposto da Bessarione all'aggiunta si rivela un indizio prezioso; infatti il passo è ricavato proprio da un'opera di Isacco Argiro, un breve trattato sull'uso di tavole per la determinazione delle congiunzioni e opposizioni lunisolari. Le tavole di quest'opera sono riprese dall'*Almagesto:*[61] Argiro le adatta al calendario giuliano e le ricalcola in base alla data del 1° settembre 1367 e al meridiano di Costantinopoli.[62] Uno dei testimoni del trattato di Argiro è il Vat. gr. 1059 di Cortasmeno, il quale riporta al f. 83v un testo molto simile a quello del Marc. gr. Z. 333: questa volta il testo è introdotto da καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, con καὶ rubricato. Rispetto all'aggiunta si registrano varianti di minima portata; un'indagine su altri testimoni del trattato di Argiro mi ha portato a scoprire che il manoscritto Monac. gr. 100, al f. 271v, contiene un testo simile a quello dell'aggiunta, ma con varianti significative (che escludono un suo utilizzo da parte di Bessarione, vedi *infra*), mentre il Marc. gr. Z. 323 (cfr. ff. 211–212) e il Vat. gr. 208 (cfr. ff. 5–7) non contengono un testo che sia simile. Sulla base dei dati ricavati dal confronto testuale, quindi, Bessarione deriva sicuramente il testo aggiuntivo del f. 168r del Marc. gr. Z. 333 dal Vat. gr. 1059, f. 83v, di Cortasmeno, come si potrà meglio verificare nell'edizione proposta più avanti.

---

60 ἐστὶ Marc. gr. Z. 333.

61 Le tavole e il metodo sulle congiunzioni lunisolari si leggono nel libro VI.3–4 dell'Almagesto. Testo e tavole editi in Heiberg, 'Syntaxis Mathematica (come sopra nota 41) 466–475.

62 Di Argiro è tràdito un altro breve trattato sulle congiunzioni lunisolari, dove stavolta vengono ricalcolate tavole riprese dalle Tavole facili. I suoi due trattati sulle congiunzioni lunisolari sono editi in F. Laurent, Isaac Argyre, Traité relatif aux calculs de syzygies. Mémoire de licence, Université catholique de Louvain (1969) e B. Wampach, Les traités sur les Tables Nouvelles du moine Isaac Argyre. Mémoire de licence, Université catholique de Louvain (1979). Si tratta di tesi non pubblicate, che sono rimaste inaccessibili nonostante ripetute richieste avanzate tramite servizi di prestito interbibliotecario di vari istituti di ricerca.

Elenco dei testimoni:

B Burneianus 91, f. 20v (apografo di T)
C Vat. gr. 1059, f. 83v (antigrafo di M)
D Monac. gr. 100, f. 271v (testimone del testo di Argiro simile a C)
F Lincop. kl. f. 10, 8v–9r (apografo di T)
M Marc. gr. 333, f. 168r
N Marc. gr. 333, f. 163v
T Vat. gr. 1047, f. 53v (apografo di M)

La filiazione C > M rispetto a C > D è provata dalle seguenti varianti:
Omissioni di D rispetto a CM:

9 μόνον om. D
11 ὃ ἐπιγέγραπται κανόνιον om. D
15 αὐταῖς – 16 ἕξομεν om. D

Errore di D rispetto a CM:

14 ἰσημερινῶν] μεσημβρινῶν D

Errore di M rispetto a CD:

10 ἐποχὴν D : ἡμέραν M : ἐποχὴν μετὰ προσθήκης μοιρῶν ϛ C

Varianti separative di D rispetto a CM:

8 εἰ βουλοίμεθα] ὅταν βουλώμεθα D
12 τὰς μοίρας τῆς ἐποχῆς εἰς τὸ σελίδιον] κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον σελίδιον D
20 ἔτι – μεσημβρίας] καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ δύο μέχρι τῆς ἑξῆς μεσημβρίας D
20 εἴτε] ἢ D
20 εἴτε – 22 μετὰ] εἰς ποῖον τῶν μερῶν ἐμπίπτουσιν τὸ πρὸ μεσημβρίας τὸ μετὰ μεσημβρίαν τὸ πρὸ μεσονυκτίον ἢ τὸ μετὰ D

Variante separativa di C rispetto a D e M:

11 post χρόνου habet ἐπὶ τοῦ διὰ Βυζαντίου παραλλήλου C

Se per l'identificazione dell'antigrafo di Bessarione sono state utili le varianti testuali, nel caso degli apografi di M bisogna basarsi soprattutto su macrovarianti. La scelta di riportare nell'edizione anche testimoni apografi del Marc. gr. Z.

333 (T, B e F) permette di apprezzare come le varianti testuali vere e proprie siano alquanto deboli per la determinazione delle relazioni stemmatiche e di comprendere come le parentele tra i testimoni menzionati possono essere stabilite principalmente sulla base di macrovarianti, come spiego di seguito.

Come detto sopra, Bessarione nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 è autore di un pentimento, perché comincia a copiare il testo di Argiro al f. 163v, all'interno del capitolo 13 della *Paradosis*, ma si arresta dopo poche righe per poi ricominciare daccapo al f. 168r. La porzione testuale interrotta al f. 163v del Marc. gr. Z. 333, non presente nel testo di Argiro (CD), è segnalata con N: ἔτι δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὴν κατάληψιν τοῦ χρόνου τῆς ἀκριβοῦς συζυγίας, ἔχοντες ἐκ τῆς διακεκριμένης μεταβάσεως τῆς σελήνης τὸ ὡριαῖον τῆς σελήνης διακεκριμένον – ὡς ἔφημεν – κίνημα μερίσομεν παρὰ τοῦτο τὴν τῆς σελήνης διόρθωσιν καὶ τὰς ἐκ τοῦ μερισμοῦ γεγονυίας ὥρας ἢ καὶ μέρος ἀπογραψόμεθα τῆς διαστάσεως ὥρας καὶ ταύτας ἢ προσθήσομεν ἢ ἀφελοῦμεν ἀκολούθως τῇ προσθέσει ἢ ἀφαιρέσει τῆς διορθώσεως. La medesima porzione testuale si ritrova di seguito nel testo M. Da segnalare un errore di Bessarione (cf. supra): ἡμέραν M : ἐποχὴν BDF : ἐποχὴν μετὰ προσθήκης μοιρῶν ς C : om. T. La lezione corretta è quella di C, ma non è scorretto scrivere soltanto ἐποχήν, quindi il copista di T, a causa della lezione di M, probabilmente non capisce e omette, mentre i copisti di B e di F, che copiano da T, correggono: non è difficile intuire quale termine aggiungere. A rafforzare questi deboli indizi per la filiazione M > T si segnalano le seguenti macrovarianti. La presenza del testo dell'aggiunta nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 è segnalata, come detto sopra, dalla proposizione τοῦτο ἔστι τὸ ζητούμενον ὄπισθεν ἔνθα σημεῖον τουτὶ Θ. Il segno simile a Θ, da solo, omessi gli altri termini, si ritrova soltanto in T e in corrispondenza dell'aggiunta (f. 53v), dove il copista trascrive il testo di Argiro, senza titolo, in coppia con la τεχνολογία (come nel Marc. gr. Z. 333), ma al di fuori dell'insieme dei testi della *Paradosis*. Una ulteriore macrovariante assicura che T è l'apografo di M: la presenza della nota marginale di richiamo ζήτει σαφεστέραν μέθοδον ἑτέραν περὶ τῶν ὡρῶν μετὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς μεθόδου ταύτης καὶ τοῦ ὑποδείγματος ἔνθα ἂν εὕροις τουτὶ τὸ σημεῖον Θ al f. 28r di T, all'interno del capitolo 13 della *Paradosis*, in corrispondenza di un testo identico a N.

Che B e F siano apografi di T non possono confermarlo le varianti di minima portata apprezzabili nell'apparato del testo greco riportato di seguito; la parentela si può stabilire grazie a una macrovariante: i copisti di B e F inseriscono l'intera aggiunta di Argiro, sprovvista di titolo e di segni a margine, all'interno del capitolo 13 della *Paradosis*, senza segnalare che si tratta di un testo non originariamente pensato per il manuale in questione, e proprio in corrispondenza del luogo in cui T pone la nota marginale ζήτει σαφεστέραν μέθοδον ἑτέραν περὶ τῶν ὡρῶν μετὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς μεθόδου ταύτης καὶ τοῦ ὑποδείγματος

ἔνθα ἂν εὕροις τουτὶ τὸ σημεῖον Θ: B e F costituiscono, dunque, la messa al pulito del lavoro di T.

Il Marc. gr. Z. 333, come accennato, rispetto all'aggiunta di Argiro, è antigrafo anche del Marc. gr. Z. 336 (non utilizzato per l'edizione per non appesantire l'apparato): la copia diretta dell'aggiunta è assicurata dal fatto che quest'ultima è trascritta da una seconda mano e successivamente rispetto alla copia della *Paradosis*; l'aggiunta è in coppia con la τεχνολογία e al di fuori dell'insieme della *Paradosis*, in un fascicolo che la precede. In più, questa seconda mano mette in relazione il capitolo sulle congiunzioni lunisolari e l'aggiunta di Argiro tramite un segno a forma di croce, il quale si osserva nel margine esterno in corrispondenza dell'*incipit* dell'aggiunta e si ritrova nel testo corrispondente del capitolo 13, il quale non è altro che la porzione analoga a N, dove non a caso il copista scrive nel margine esterno, vicino al segno di richiamo: ζήτει εἰς τὴν ἀρχήν.

Riassumendo, i testimoni dell'aggiunta nella *Paradosis* discendono dal Marc. gr. Z. 333: sono copie dirette il Vat. gr. 1047 e il Marc. gr. Z. 336 (in quest'ultimo frutto dell'attività di una mano successiva); il Burneianus 91 e il Lincop. kl. f. 10 copiano invece l'aggiunta dal Vat. gr. 1047 (l'aggiunta si legge anche nel Vat. gr. 1852, molto simile al Lincop. kl. f. 10, ma senza varianti significative: in questo caso non ho potuto rintracciarne con certezza la provenienza, poiché si tratta di un testimone parziale della *Paradosis* con un complesso gioco di varianti).

Di seguito viene proposta l'edizione del testo dell'aggiunta di Bessarione.[63]

Εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ

ἔτι δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὴν κατάληψιν τοῦ χρόνου τῆς ἀκριβοῦς συζυγίας, ἔχοντες ἐκ τῆς
διακεκριμένης μεταβάσεως τῆς σελήνης τὸ ὡριαῖον τῆς σελήνης διακεκριμένον –
ὡς ἔφημεν – κίνημα μερίσομεν παρὰ τοῦτο τὴν τῆς σελήνης διόρθωσιν καὶ τὰς ἐκ
5 τοῦ μερισμοῦ γεγονυίας ὥρας ἢ καὶ μέρος ἀπογραψόμεθα τῆς διαστάσεως ὥρας
καὶ ταύτας ἢ προσθήσομεν ἢ ἀφελοῦμεν ἀκολούθως τῇ προσθέσει ἢ ἀφαιρέσει
τῆς διορθώσεως.

63 Nel greco si adotta la punteggiatura raccomandata da Acerbi per i testi che si basano sul "linguaggio delle procedure"; si veda Acerbi, I codici stilistici (come sopra nota 56) 213. Regole: le virgole separano le proposizioni principali all'interno della "procedura", il punto alto o il punto basso segnalano separazioni nella catena delle procedure. Tra i participi e i corrispondenti verbi principali non vanno poste virgole, per marcarne la parentela e non appesantire un dettato che sarebbe occupato da troppi segni di interpunzione. Per facilitare la comprensione al lettore il testo è seguito da traduzione.

καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, εἰ βουλοίμεθα γνῶναι τὰς μετὰ μεσημβρίαν ὥρας τῆς συ-
ζυγίας, πότερον ἡμεριναί εἰσι μόνον ἢ καὶ νυκτερινὰς περιέχουσιν, εἰσοίσομεν
10 τὴν τοῦ ἡλίου συνοδικὴν ἢ πανσεληνιακὴν ἐποχὴν εἰς τὸ κανόνιον ὃ ἐπιγέγρα-
πται κανόνιον τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν ἰσημερινῶν ὡρῶν τοῦ ὅλου χρόνου (δηλονότι τὰς
μοίρας τῆς ἐποχῆς εἰς τὸ σελίδιον τῶν μοιρῶν), καὶ τὰ παρακείμενα αὐταῖς ἐπὶ
τοῦ σελιδίου οὗ ἐπάνω γέγραπται ὁ τοῦ ζῳδίου αὐτῆς ἀριθμὸς λαβόντες ἕξομεν
τὸ διάστημα τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης πόσων ὡρῶν ἰσημερινῶν ἐστιν· ὡσαύτως καὶ
15 τὰς λειπούσας αὐταῖς εἰς τὰς κδ λαβόντες ἕξομεν καὶ τὸ τῆς μετὰ τὴν μεσημβρίαν
τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης διάστημα νυκτός· καὶ ἔτι τὰ ἡμίση τούτων λαβόντες ἕξομεν
τό τε ἀπὸ μεσημβρίας ἄχρι δύσεως ἡλίου διάστημα καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ δύσεως ἡλίου ἄχρι
μεσονυκτίου ἔτι τε καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ μεσονυκτίου ἄχρι τῆς ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου ἀλλὰ δὴ καὶ
τὸ ἀπ' ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου ἄχρι τῆς ἐφεξῆς μεσημβρίας, καὶ ταῦτα ἔχοντες διακρι-
20 νοῦμεν τὰς τῆς συζυγίας ὥρας, εἴτε ἡμεριναί εἰσιν εἴτε καὶ νυκτεριναί, καὶ εἴτε εἰς
τὸ μετὰ τὴν μεσημβρίαν ἢ πρὸ τῆς μεσημβρίας (ἥμισυ μέρος τῆς ἡμέρας) ἐκπί-
πτουσιν αὗται αἱ ὧραι ἢ εἰς τὰς πρὸ τοῦ μεσονυκτίου ἢ εἰς τὰς μετὰ τὸ
μεσονύκτιον.

1 εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦ Ἀργυροῦ rubro pictum **M** : om. **BFNT** | **2** ἔτι δὲ rubro pictum **M** | 3 μεταβάσεως τῆς σελήνης] τ. σ. μ. **NT** | 5 ἀπογραψόμεθα] ἀπογραφόμεθα **B** | **6** post ὥρας desinit **N** | **8** καὶ] incipit, rubro pictum **C** εἰ βουλοίμεθα] ὅταν βουλώμεθα incipit **D** μόνον om. **D**| **10** ἐποχὴν **BDF** : ἡμέραν **M** : ἐποχὴν μετὰ προσθήκης μοιρῶν ϛ **C** : om. **T**| **11** ὃ ἐπιγέγραπται κανόνιον om. **D** post χρόνου habet ἐπὶ τοῦ διὰ Βυζαντίου παραλλήλου **C** | **12** τὰς μοίρας τῆς ἐποχῆς εἰς τὸ σελίδιον] κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον σελίδιον **D** | **14** τὸ] δὲ **D** ἰσημερινῶν] μεσημβρινῶν **D** | **15** τὴν om. **F** | **16** αὐταῖς – ἕξομεν om. **D** | **17** post ἀπὸ add. τῆς **BCDF** καὶ **B** ἄχρι] μέχρι **B** | **18** ἄχρι τῆς] ἄχρις **B** | **19** ἔτι – μεσημβρίας] καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ δύο μέχρι τῆς ἑξῆς μεσημβρίας **D** ταῦτα ἔχοντες] ταῦτ' ἔχοντες **BC** | **20** εἴτε] ἢ **D** καὶ om. **BD** | **22** εἴτε – μετὰ] εἰς ποῖον τῶν μερῶν ἐμπίπτουσιν τὸ πρὸ μεσημβρίας τὸ μετὰ μεσημβρίαν τὸ πρὸ μεσονυκτίον ἢ τὸ μετὰ **D** | **23** post μεσονύκτιον add. **B** καὶ ἄλλως δὲ θέλοντες λαβεῖν τὸν χρόνον τῆς ἀκριβοῦς συζυγίας, ἔχοντες ἐκ τῆς διακεκριμένης τῆς σελήνης μεταβάσεως τὸ ὡριαῖον τῆς σελήνης διακεκριμένον ὡς ἔφημεν κίνημα μερίσομεν παρὰ τοῦτο τὴν τῆς σελήνης διόρθωσιν, καὶ τὰς ἐκ τοῦ μερισμοῦ γεγονυίας ὥρας ἢ καὶ μέρος ἀπογραφόμεθα τῆς διαστάσεως ὥρας.

Per lo stesso,[64] di Argiro

E ancora, in vista della determinazione del tempo della congiunzione esatta, avendo il moto orario corretto della luna a partire dallo spostamento corretto della luna – come dicevamo – divideremo per questo la correzione della luna, e trascriveremo le ore (o anche la parte) che risultano dalla divisione come ore del

64 Il testo che precede, al pari di quello riportato di seguito, ha lo scopo di determinare il tempo delle congiunzioni lunisolari.

distanziarsi, e queste le sommeremo o sottrarremo secondo l’addizione o la sottrazione della correzione.

E dopo ciò, se vogliamo sapere se le ore dopo mezzogiorno sono soltanto diurne o ne contengono anche di notturne, inseriremo la posizione[65] di congiunzione o di plenilunio[66] nella tavola intitolata “tavola delle ore equinoziali giorno per giorno del tempo totale” (è chiaro che i gradi della posizione vanno nella colonna dei gradi), e prendendo ciò che ad essi corrisponde nella colonna sopra la quale è scritto “numero del suo segno” avremo di quante ore equinoziali è la distanza in quel giorno; e allo stesso modo, prendendo il loro complementare a 24 avremo anche la distanza notturna in quel giorno dopo mezzogiorno; e ancora, prendendo la metà di queste avremo sia la distanza da mezzogiorno fino al tramonto del sole sia quella dal tramonto del sole fino a mezzanotte e ancora quella da mezzanotte fino al sorgere del sole ma anche quella dal sorgere del sole fino al mezzogiorno successivo, e avendo ciò correggeremo le ore della congiunzione, sia diurne sia pure notturne, e sia che queste ore cadano dopo mezzogiorno o prima di mezzogiorno (la metà parte del giorno)[67] o dopo mezzanotte o prima di mezzanotte.

L’analisi delle varianti dell’aggiunta di Bessarione permette alcune considerazioni. Anzitutto, la fonte della *Paradosis* nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 si rintraccia nel Marc. gr. Z. 323 (ff. 71r–94v), un testimone databile tra la fine del secolo XIV e l’inizio del XV.[68] Le varianti testuali dei diciotto capitoli canonici della *Paradosis* permettono di ipotizzare una filiazione diretta tra i due testimoni. Di conseguenza, la versione di Bessarione della *Paradosis* potrebbe essere il risultato di una copia combinata tra il Marc. gr. Z. 323 (dal quale vengono ripresi i diciotto capitoli della serie canonica) e il Vat. gr. 1059 (aggiunta).

Come accennato nella descrizione del Marc. gr. Z. 333 (vedi sezione 3), l’interazione con il manoscritto vergato da Cortasmeno, maestro di Bessarione a Costantinopoli, mi ha permesso di ipotizzare che il nostro abbia copiato la *Paradosis* probabilmente a Costantinopoli, e sotto la guida di Cortasmeno stesso.

---

65 Bessarione riporta erroneamente ἡμέραν, “giorno”. Corretta la versione di **BCDF.**

66 Si tratta delle posizioni tra terra luna e sole. La posizione indicata come συνοδική indica la “fase di congiunzione”, nella quale, prendendo la terra come punto d’osservazione, la luna si trova tra quest’ultima e il sole. La “fase di opposizione” o “plenilunio” si ha nel caso opposto, quando la luna si trova, osservando dalla terra, dalla parte opposta rispetto al sole.

67 Si indica tra parentesi la porzione testuale poiché si tratta sicuramente di una glossa.

68 Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2) per la filiazione tra i manoscritti; Mioni, Codices graeci (come sopra nota 3) 38–44 e la scheda di P. Eleuteri in Fiaccadori, Bessarione e l’umanesimo (come sopra nota 32) 468 per la descrizione del Marc. gr. Z. 323.

La datazione del Vat. gr. 1059 (1403–1413) lo conferma. Altri due dati giocano in favore dell'ipotesi: il sistema di rubriche adottato da Bessarione nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 è lo stesso adottato da Cortasmeno nel Vat. gr. 1059 e la riorganizzazione dei testi astronomici, diffusamente esercitata nel *recueil* di Cortasmeno (vedi sezione 2) trova un analogo nella riorganizzazione della *Paradosis* operata da Bessarione. Bessarione, dunque, imita il maestro nelle scelte editoriali del Vat. gr. 1059, copiando, contaminando e riorganizzando la *Paradosis*, ma si potrebbe anche pensare che Bessarione abbia effettuato la copia dopo il 1431 a Mistrà, portando con sé il manoscritto del maestro costantinopolitano. Le conclusioni svolte in questo passaggio verranno riprese nella sezione 7.

Lo stile del testo di Argiro, ossia l'aggiunta di Bessarione, presenta caratteristiche comuni a tutti gli altri capitoli che formano la *Paradosis*, più precisamente comuni alle sezioni che costituiscono la prima e la seconda parte di ciascun capitolo (parte teorica e parte pratica, intitolata ὑπόδειγμα – si veda la sezione 4). In essi si riscontrano gli elementi costitutivi del "linguaggio delle procedure", i quali sono rintracciabili già all'origine della tradizione dei testi di matematica greca.[69] Attraverso un lungo processo di trasmissione essi giungono fino a Bisanzio in età paleologa rafforzati nelle loro caratteristiche fondamentali, le quali vengono descritte di seguito, riprendendo esempi puntuali dal testo edito sopra, per agevolare la comprensione del lettore. La presente analisi del testo, pur riferendosi ad una composizione di Argiro, è valida anche per ciascun capitolo della *Paradosis* e viene offerta perché è necessario che il lettore abbia conoscenza dello stile delle procedure in vista delle ulteriori modifiche di Bessarione alla *Paradosis*, oggetto della prossima sezione.

Il "linguaggio delle procedure" ha l'obiettivo di descrivere catene di operazioni, contenenti dati legati tra loro nel flusso operazionale. Le catene di operazioni consistono in sequenze di proposizioni principali, coordinate tra loro tramite una congiunzione, dove il verbo di norma è al futuro (per. es. μερίσομεν, προσθήσομεν, ἀφελοῦμεν, εἰσοίσομεν, ἕξομεν). Alle principali è subordinato un solo livello di ipotassi, costituito da uno o più participi (di solito aoristi) congiunti con il soggetto operante (per es. ἔχοντες […] μερίσομεν – καὶ τὰ παρακείμενα […] λαβόντες ἕξομεν – καὶ ταῦτα ἔχοντες διακρινοῦμεν). Nel caso più participi siano subordinati alla medesima principale, per coordinarli si usa una congiunzione. Le proposizioni principali e le subordinate participiali formano due flussi operazionali ben distinti: il primo è contraddistinto da forme verbali,

---

69 Per la terminologia e una descrizione più esauriente del "linguaggio delle procedure" vedi Acerbi, I codici stilistici (come sopra nota 56) 183–189.

in tempo presente o futuro,[70] le quali si riferiscono al risultato ottenuto dall'operazione. Nelle operazioni delle procedure di norma non compaiono numeri, bensì espressioni denotative che definiscono gli enti matematici in gioco (ad. es. τὴν τῆς σελήνης διόρθωσιν – τὰς μετὰ μεσημβρίαν ὥρας τῆς συζυγίας – τὸ τῆς μετὰ τὴν μεσημβρίαν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης διάστημα νυκτός – τό τε ἀπὸ μεσημβρίας ἄχρι δύσεως ἡλίου διάστημα). In questo modo le procedure acquisiscono da un lato generalità, comprovata da avverbi come ἀκολούθως e ὡσαύτως, ma dall'altro sviluppano testi nel loro insieme poco scorrevoli, sebbene efficaci.

Le peculiarità fin qui descritte rendono testimonianza di risorse caratterizzanti della lingua greca antica: la possibilità di formare lunghe espressioni denotative, l'uso estensivo dei participi, l'uso dell'aoristo per marcare l'assenza di connotazione temporale all'interno della frase. Ciò ha permesso la formazione di un canone stilistico ben definito e di lunga durata; infatti, il "linguaggio delle procedure", per rimanere nella cornice dei testi astronomici, è attestato a partire dall'*Almagesto* (secolo II), viene in seguito utilizzato estensivamente nei manuali per l'uso delle tavole, ad esempio nel *Piccolo Commentario* di Teone (IV secolo) e nel manuale per le tavole facili attribuito a Stefano di Alessandria (VII secolo),[71] fino ai manuali astronomici di età paleologa, come la *Paradosis* (XIV secolo).[72]

Bessarione senza dubbio si sente autorizzato a modificare la struttura della *Paradosis* perché si tratta di un testo d'uso. La congruenza del tema delle congiunzioni lunisolari col resto dei capitoli circostanti (congiunzioni ed eclissi) motiva la decisione di porre il testo di Argiro dopo la τεχνολογία. L'analisi dello stile del testo aggiunto è l'occasione per apprende i tratti salienti del linguaggio canonico delle procedure che costituiscono l'intera *Paradosis*, quindi dei manuali bizantini per l'uso delle tavole astronomiche.

70 In alcuni casi, qui non riportati, trova impiego anche il perfetto in funzione risultativa.
71 Edizione del manuale di Stefano alessandrino in J. Lempire, Le commentaire astronomique aux 'Tables Faciles' de Ptolémée attribué à Stephanos d'Alexandrie. Tome I. Histoire du texte. É dition critique, traduction et commentaire (chapitres 1 – 16). *Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain*, 68. Leuven 2016.
72 Analisi linguistica dei capitoli della Paradosis: Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2).

6 I supplementi algoritmici ai capitoli della *Paradosis*

La seconda innovazione di Bessarione introdotta nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 è un *unicum* nella cornice della tradizione testuale della *Paradosis* e consiste nell'inserimento di supplementi al termine di alcuni capitoli del manuale, scritti nel "linguaggio degli algoritmi".[73]

È opportuno riportare l'attenzione sulle tre parti che costituiscono la struttura dei capitoli dei manuali per l'uso delle tavole astronomiche:

1: esposizione teorica sull'uso delle tavole secondo obiettivi specificati nel titolo del capitolo;

2: ὑπόδειγμα: applicazione pratica della teoria ad un esempio redatta nel "linguaggio delle procedure";

3: ψηφοφορία: calcolo paradigmatico, in formato tabellare o discorsivo o in entrambi i formati, in "linguaggio degli algoritmi", basato sugli stessi parametri dell'ὑπόδειγμα. A volte, nello stesso linguaggio, viene aggiunto un ulteriore calcolo, in accordo col metodo esposto nell'ὑπόδειγμα, ma basato su differenti dati cronologici.

Ebbene, non tutti i capitoli della *Paradosis* contengono dei supplementi algoritmici (3). La seconda innovazione di Bessarione consiste in una aggiunta sistematica della parte algoritmica laddove essa manchi. Si tratta di supplementi, in quanto congrui alle tematiche dei capitoli in cui sono inseriti e scritti allo scopo di completare e sintetizzare le parti che li precedono, come si rileva facilmente dalle porzioni testuali che li introducono (ad es. ὡς καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐκθέσεως ὑποτέτακται, vedi sotto testo A).

Una volta rilevati i supplementi, ho ricercato probabili fonti di Bessarione, che ho rintracciato di nuovo nel libro III della già menzionata *Tribiblos astronomike* di Teodoro Meliteniote (la versione arricchita e raffinata della *Paradosis* – si veda la sezione 4). In effetti, i capitoli dell'opera astronomica di Meliteniote sono per la maggior parte analoghi a quelli della *Paradosis*, ma sono ogni volta corredati di supplementi algoritmici, talvolta in entrambi i formati possibili, ossia tabellare e discorsivo (quest'ultimo è il formato delle integrazioni di Bessarione); la *Paradosis* contiene invece soltanto un algoritmo in formato testuale e pochi altri algoritmi tabellari. Ho dunque collazionato i supplementi algoritmici del Marc.

---

73 Per la terminologia e una descrizione esauriente del "linguaggio degli algoritmi" vedi Acerbi, I codici stilistici (come sopra nota 56) 190–193.

gr. Z. 333 con i capitoli corrispondenti negli unici due testimoni manoscritti del libro III dell'opera astronomica di Meliteniote, cioè il Vat. gr. 792, vergato da Meliteniote stesso, e il Vat. gr. 1059, copiato da Cortasmeno. Come nel caso dell'aggiunta al capitolo sulle congiunzioni lunisolari, il manoscritto Vat. gr. 1059 risulta la fonte più probabile per gli interventi di Bessarione, il quale, dunque, confronta la sua copia della *Paradosis* con i capitoli analoghi della versione arricchita (il libro III della *Tribiblos*) e ne trae i supplementi mancanti per la versione che desidera ottenere. Come nel caso dell'aggiunta per le congiunzioni lunisolari, la presentazione del testo scelta da Bessarione imita quella di Cortasmeno, in quanto le iniziali e la punteggiatura nei supplementi algoritmici sono rubricati, così da mettere in evidenza le partizioni del testo.

Per l'edizione, come accennato, ho utilizzato anche il testimone autografo della *Tribiblos*, ossia il Vat. gr. 792.[74] Ecco l'elenco dei testimoni: **C** = Vat. gr. 1059; **M** = Marc. gr. 333; **V** = Vat. gr. 792. Prima della lettura dei supplementi algoritmici vanno segnalate tre varianti testuali significative a conferma della dipendenza di M da C, comprovata dalle varianti testuali apprezzabili nelle note. La prima si legge al termine del capitolo sul calcolo della longitudine lunare; essa introduce, a fini di chiarezza, un supplemento algoritmico in formato tabellare (qui non riportato) presente in gran parte dei testimoni della *Paradosis:* il testimone di Bessarione (M) è il solo a riportare questa porzione testuale, altrimenti presente soltanto nella versione arricchita della *Paradosis:*

M, f. 153r; **V**, f. 314r; **C**, f. 428v
ὑπετάξαμεν δὲ τοὺς ἀριθμοὺς τῆς ψηφοφορίας πρὸς εὐχερῆ τῶν ῥηθέντων κατάληψιν

La seconda porzione testuale in questione si legge nel capitolo corrispondente al testo F, dedicato alle congiunzioni lunisolari. Nel rigo corrispondente al titolo si legge:

---

74 Le abbreviazioni sono state sciolte. I numerali tra parentesi corrispondono ai segni zodiacali: la divisione dell'eclittica in dodici segni zodiacali (ζῴδια) è una consuetudine nell'astronomia antica e medievale. A ciascun segno spettano 30° sull'orbita solare (l'eclittica). Il conteggio parte dall'ariete, che coincide per convenzione con l'equinozio di primavera. Seguono il segno zodiacale: il numerale ad indicare il grado, i sessantesimi indicati dagli apici destri. I termini tecnici del lessico astronomico persiano in trascrizione greca, attestati nelle varianti dell'apparato, non verranno commentati e si rimanda per essi a Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2). Data la povertà sintattica e il lessico prettamente tecnico-astronomico, una traduzione non gioverebbe al lettore.

M, f. 162r; **V**, f. 327r; **C**, f. 434r
περὶ συνόδων καὶ πανσελήνων· ὅπως αὗται κατὰ Πέρσας ἐφοδεύονται
La mancanza del segmento ὅπως αὗται κατὰ Πέρσας ἐφοδεύονται in V riconferma il legame diretto tra M e C.

La terza prova per M < C è una macrovariante. Come si noterà nell'apparato critico, Bessarione copia sistematicamente la traduzione greca dei termini tecnici persiani traslitterati, mentre V riporta soltanto la traslitterazione dal persiano. Esempi:

πλάτος μὲν βόρειον σελήνης M : ἄρξ μὲν τῆς σελήνης σαμὰλ V : post σελήνης add. ἤτοι περσικῶς ἄρξ σαμᾶλ C
μέση κίνησις διακεκριμένη M : βασατμαντὰλ V : βασατμαντὰλ ἤτοι μέση διακεκριμένη C

Testi

A. Capitolo sulla correzione delle posizioni del sole e della luna

M, f. 153r (gran parte nel margine esterno); **V**, f. 315r; **C**, f. 429r

ὡς καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐκθέσεως ὑποτέτακται.
ψηφοφορία.
ἡλίου ἐποχὴ Αἰγοκέρωτος ιβ λζʹ νγʺ· τὰ ἐκ τοῦ κανονίου τῆς τελείας διορθώσεως τῆς ἐποχῆς αὐτοῦ ō κγʺ· ἄφελε ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ ἡλίου ἐποχῆς· γίνεται ἡλίου dia-
5 κεκριμένη ἐποχὴ Αἰγοκέρωτος ιβ λζʹ λʺ.
σελήνης ἐποχὴ Λέοντος κθ λζʹ ιεʺ· τὰ ἐκ τοῦ κανονίου τῆς τελείας διορθώσεως τῆς ἐποχῆς αὐτῆς εʹ ιγʺ· ἄφελε ἀπὸ τῆς τῆς σελήνης ἐποχῆς· γίνεται σελήνης διακεκριμένη ἐποχὴ κθ λβʹ βʺ.

6 τὰ] ἀ **V** | 7 τῆς om. **C** | 8 post ἐποχὴ add. Λέοντος **CV**

B. Capitolo sull'obliquità solare

M, f. 154r; **V**, f. 315v; **C**, f. 429v

καὶ δηλοῦσι ταῦτα οἱ ἀριθμοὶ οὓς ὑπετάξαμεν.
ψηφοφορία.
ζῴδια μοῖραι λεπτὰ τῆς διακεκριμένης ἐποχῆς τοῦ ἡλίου (θ) ιβ λζʹ λʺ· τὰ ἐκ τοῦ
5 κανονίου τῆς λοξώσεως ἡλίου μοῖραι κβ νςʹ λεʺ· λελόξωται ὁ ἥλιος ἀπὸ τοῦ ἰσημερινοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ διὰ μέσων τῶν ζῳδίων κύκλου μοίρας κβ νςʹ λεʺ ποιούμενος νοτίαν ἀνάβασιν.

1 οἱ ἀριθμοὶ] τῶν ἀριθμῶν **CV** | **5** ποιούμενος] ποιούμενος σααὲτ **V** : ποιούμενον σααὲτ ἤτοι **C** | **6** ἀνάβασιν om. **V**

C. Capitolo sulla latitudine lunare

M, f. 155r; **V**, f. 317r; **C**, f. 430r

ψηφοφορία.
ζῴδια μοῖραι λεπτὰ τῆς διακεκριμένης ἐποχῆς τῆς σελήνης (δ) κθ λβ′ β″· ἄφελε τὰ τοῦ ἀναβιβάζοντος (α) η νη′ ζ″· λοιπὰ μῆκος σελήνης (γ) κ λγ′ νε″· τὰ ἐκ τοῦ κανονίου τοῦ πλάτους τῆς σελήνης δ μ′ μη″ μοῖραι δηλονότι καὶ λεπτά. ἔστι
5 τοίνυν πλάτος μὲν βόρειον σελήνης μοῖραι δ μ′ μη″, αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ σελήνη βορείαν ποιεῖται κατάβασιν.

1 ante ψηφοφορία add. καὶ γίνεται ταῦτα δῆλα διὰ τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀριθμῶν **CV** | **4** δηλονότι καὶ om. **V** | **5** πλάτος μὲν βόρειον σελήνης] ἄρξ μὲν τῆς σελήνης σαμὰλ **V** : post σελήνης add. ἤτοι περσικῶς ἄρξ σαμᾶλ **C**

D. Capitolo sulle posizioni in latitudine dei tre pianeti Saturno Giove e Marte sull'eclittica

M, f. 159v; **V**, f. 322v (in formato tabellare); **C**, f. 433r

ψηφοφορία πλάτους τοῦ Κρόνου
μέση κίνησις διακεκριμένη Κρόνου (ε) ε κθ′ λ″· πρόσθες ζ· γίνεται (ε) ιβ κθ′ λ″ μέσης τελείας κινήσεως διακεκριμένης· ἰδία διακεκριμένη (ζ) ιθ α′ μβ″· πλάτους λεπτὰ νότια ō να′· δευτέρου πλάτους β ν′· πολλαπλασίασον· γίνεται β κδ′ λ″.
5 ἀφίσταται ὁ τοῦ Κρόνου ἀστὴρ ἀπὸ τοῦ διὰ μέσων τῶν ζῳδίων πρὸς νότον μοῖραι β κδ′ λ″.

πλάτους τοῦ Κρόνου om. **CV** | **2** μέση κίνησις διακεκριμένη] βασατμαντὰλ **V** : βασατμαντὰλ ἤτοι μέση διακεκριμένη **C** Κρόνου om. **V** | **3** μέσης τελείας κινήσεως] μέση τελεία κίνησις **V** διακεκριμένης om. **CV** ἰδία διακεκριμένη] χασᾶ μαντὰλ **V** : χασᾶ μαντὰλ ἤτοι ἰδία διακεκριμένη **C** | **4** ō om. **CV**

E. Capitolo sulla latitudine di Venere e Mercurio (περὶ τοῦ πλάτους Ἀφροδίτης καὶ Ἑρμοῦ)

M, f. 162r; **V**, f. 325r (in formato tabellare); **C**, f. 434r (in formato tabellare)

ὡς καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐκθέσεως ὑποτέτακται.
ψηφοφορία τοῦ πλάτους τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ.
μέση διακεκριμένη (β) ϛ μβ′· ταπεινὰ λεπτὰ τοῦ πρώτου πλάτους ō νε′· τὰ τοῦ πρώτου πλάτους α λε′ βόρεια· πολλαπλασίασον· γίνεται α κζ′ ε″ πρῶτον πλάτος
5 Ἑρμοῦ βόρειον.
ἰδία διακεκριμένη (ζ) κϛ ιη′· ταπεινὰ λεπτὰ τοῦ δευτέρου πλάτους ō κβ′· τὰ τοῦ δευτέρου πλάτους α κζ′ βόρεια· πολλαπλασίασον· γίνεται λα′ νδ″ δεύτερον πλάτος Ἑρμοῦ βόρειον· πρόσθες α κζ′ ε″· γίνεται πλάτος Ἑρμοῦ βόρειον α νη′ νθ″. διορθώσεως πλάτους λεπτὰ ι′ νότια· πρόσθες τοῖς α νη′ νθ″· γίνεται β η′ νθ″.
10 ἔστιν οὖν τέλειον πλάτος Ἑρμοῦ βόρειον μοιρῶν β η′ νθ″.

2 ψηφοφορία τοῦ πλάτους τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ] ψηφοφορία **V** : om. **C** | **3** μέση διακεκριμένη] βασατμαντὰλ **V** : βασατμαντὰλ ἤτοι μέση διακεκριμένη **C** ō om. **V** | **6** ἰδία διακεκριμένη] χασὰ μαντὰλ **V** : χασᾶ μαντὰλ ἤτοι ἰδία διακεκριμένη **C** ō om. **CV** | **10** ἔστιν – β η′ νθ″] τὸ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦ τέλειον πλάτος ἐστὶ μοιρῶν β η′ νθ″ βόρειον **CV**

F. Capitolo su congiunzioni e opposizioni lunisolari

F.1: **M**, f. 166v; **V**, f. 332v; **C**, f. 436r

ἧς κγ^{η} τοῦ Ὀκτωβρίου ἡμέρας καὶ αἱ εἰλημμέναι ἐποχαὶ τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τῆς σελήνης ἦσαν συνεγγίζουσαι μᾶλλον πρὸς τὴν πανσεληνιακὴν συζυγίαν. καὶ πρὸς πλείονα τῶν ῥηθέντων κατάληψιν καὶ τοὺς ἀριθμοὺς ὑπετάξαμεν.

3 καὶ om. **V**

M, f. 166v; **V**, f. 333r–v; **C**, f. 436v: algoritmo in formato tabellare secondo gli stessi parametri di quello riportato di seguito. Si tratta dello stesso algoritmo in due formati espositivi differenti.

F.2: **M**, f. 167r; **V**, f. 334r; **C**, f. 437v

κατὰ τὴν ια^{ην} τοῦ Πεχμὰν ἡλίου ἐποχὴ διακεκριμένη Σκορπίου θ κγ′ ιθ″· ἄφελε τὴν κατὰ τὴν ι^{ην} τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐποχὴν τοῦ ἡλίου διακεκριμένην Σκορπίου η κβ′ να″· λοιπὰ μετάβασις ἡλίου α ō κη″.

κατὰ τὴν ια^{ην} τοῦ Πεχμὰν σελήνης διακεκριμένη ἐποχὴ Ταύρου ιη ις′ ζ″· ἄφελε τὴν κατὰ τὴν ι^{ην} τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐποχὴν τῆς σελήνης διακεκριμένην Ταύρου β λβ′ νζ″· λοιπὰ σελήνης μετάβασις ιε μγ′ ι″· ἄφελε α ō κη″· λοιπὰ σελήνης διακεκριμένη μετάβασις ιδ μβ′ μβ″· τούτων τὸ κδ^{ὸν}· γίνεται ὡριαῖον σελήνης διακεκριμένον κίνημα ō λς′ μζ″.

αἱ συνεγγίζουσαι πρὸς πανσεληνιακὴν συζυγίαν διακεκριμέναι ἐποχαὶ κατὰ τὴν ι^{ην} τοῦ Πεχμὰν ἡλίου μὲν Σκορπίου η κβ′ να″ σελήνης δὲ Ταύρου β λβ′ νζ″· τούτων διάστασις ε μθ′ νδ″· πολλαπλασίασον ἐπὶ τὰ ε′ λεπτά· γίνεται ō κθ′ ι″ ἡλίου διόρθωσις· πρόσθες ταῖς ε μθ′ νδ″· γίνεται σελήνης διόρθωσις ς ιθ′ δ″· πρόσθες τῇ σεληνιακῇ ἐποχῇ ταῖς τοῦ Ταύρου β λβ′ νζ″· γίνεται πανσεληνιακὴ ἐποχὴ Ταύρου η νβ′ α″· πρόσθες καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου ἐποχῇ ταῖς τοῦ Σκορπίου η κβ′ να″ τὴν τοῦ ἡλίου διόρθωσιν τὰς ō κθ′ ι″· γίνεται ἡλίου πανσεληνιακὴ ἐποχὴ Σκορπίου η νβ′ α″.

σελήνης διόρθωσις ς ιθ′ δ″· παρὰ τὸ ὡριαῖον διακεκριμένον τῆς σελήνης κίνημα τὰ ō λς′ κζ″· γίνεται ὥρα τῆς διαστάσεως ι τρίτον ἔγγιστα.

ἀπὸ Κριοῦ μέχρι τῆς τοῦ ἡλίου πανσεληνιακῆς ἐποχῆς μοῖραι σιθ ἔγγιστα· ἄφες ρπ· λοιπὰ μοῖραι λθ· ἑξηκοστὰ κανονίου ἡλίου ἀπὸ ἰσημερίας λδ′, πλάτος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως μοῖραι με· κανόνιον ἐξάρματος ὧραι γ κη′· πολλαπλασίασον ἐπὶ τὰ λδ′· γίνεται α νζ′ νβ″· τὸ τέταρτον τούτων· κθ′ κη″· πρόσθες αὐτοῖς· γίνεται β κζ′ κ″· ἄφες τῶν ιε χρόνων· λοιπὰ ιβ λβ′ μ″· πολλαπλασίασον ἐπὶ τὰς ιβ μοίρας· γίνεται χρόνοι ἰσημερινοὶ ρν λβ′· μέρισον παρὰ τὸν ιε· γίνεται ὧραι τῆς ι^{ης} τοῦ Πεχμὰν ι τριακοστόν· τούτων τὸ ἥμισυ· ε ἑξηκοστόν· ἄφελε ταύτας ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς διαστάσεως ὡρῶν ι τρίτου· λοιπαὶ ὧραι τῆς ἀκριβοῦς πανσελήνου μετὰ δύσιν ἡλίου ε τέταρτον πεντεκαιδέκατον.

ἔσται συζυγία πανσεληνιακὴ κατὰ μὲν Πέρσας τῇ ι^{η} τοῦ Πεχμὰν κατὰ δὲ Ῥωμαίους τῇ κγ^{ῃ} τοῦ Ὀκτωβρίου ὥρᾳ ἰσημερινῇ μετὰ δύσιν ἡλίου ε τέταρτον πεντεκαιδέκατον.

1 ante κατὰ add. ψηφοφορίας τῆς πανσεληνιακῆς συζυγίας **C** | **3** μετάβασις ἡλίου] μπότ λίου **V** : μπὸτ ἡλίου τουτέστι μετάβασις ἡλίου **C** | **7** σελήνης διακεκριμένη μετάβασις] μπὸτ μαντὰλ **V** : μπὸτ μαντὰλ ἤτοι σελήνης διακεκριμένη μετάβασις **C** | **14** τοῦ ἡλίου] ἡλιακῇ **V** | **17** τῆς om. **CV** | **18** τρίτον] γ^{ον} ut semper posthac **M** : γ″ ut semper posthac **CV** | **20** ἄφες] ἄφε(λε) **V** λοιπὰ] λοιπαὶ **C** | **23** ἄφες] ἄφε(λε) **V**

Sebbene non si tratti di composizioni originali, per ricostruire i motivi degli interventi di Bessarione è opportuno analizzare lo stile delle porzioni testuali riportate nei punti da A a F, rammentando le caratteristiche stilistiche del testo della sezione 5. Ora, a differenza dell’aggiunta di Argiro, che è scritta nel “linguaggio delle procedure” per descrivere una catena di operazioni mirando al maggior grado possibile di generalità, i testi scritti nel “linguaggio degli algoritmi” descrivono a loro volta catene di operazioni, ma che agiscono su casi

particolari. Ciò spiega l'abbondanza di valori numerici nei testi A–F rispetto alle lunghe espressioni denotative; non a caso i testi editi sopra sono calcoli effettuati per la longitudine di Costantinopoli, impostati in base al calendario persiano (il riferimento sono tavole astronomiche persiane) per il giorno 8 del mese di Pharouartes dell'anno 722 dell'era di Yazdegerd (testi A–E) oppure (testo F) per il giorno 10 del mese di Pechman dell'anno 721 dell'era di Yazdegerd, corrispondenti, nell'ordine, al 25 dicembre 1352 e al 23 ottobre 1351.[75]

La caratteristiche salienti dei supplementi algoritmici A–F si lasciano riassumere nei seguenti punti:

1) gli algoritmi sono costituiti da sequenze di proposizioni principali coordinate per asindeto;

2) ciascuna proposizione è caratterizzata da una forma verbale alla seconda persona dell'imperativo, per lo più aoristo (il tempo adeguato per marcare l'assenza di connotazione temporale – si veda l'analisi linguistica del testo della sezione 5);

3) la forma verbale equivale all'operazione; se omessa, è sostituita da indicatori caratteristici: la preposizione ἐπί per la moltiplicazione, la preposizione παρά per la divisione, mentre l'addizione (πρόσθες) e la sottrazione (ἄφελε o ἄφες) sono di solito espresse. Al verbo dell'operazione sono associati due complementi, uno diretto e uno indiretto, i quali coincidono con gli operandi. Spesso uno dei due viene omesso;

4) il risultato di un'operazione si trova sempre in una proposizione a sé, caratterizzata dal verbo γίνεται oppure da un aggettivo in posizione predicativa (dopo una sottrazione vengono sempre usate forme di λοιπός); in alcuni casi la proposizione del risultato coincide col solo valore numerico;

5) le operazioni agiscono su oggetti o valori numerici; gli oggetti sono segnalati attraverso espressioni denotative; oggetto e valore numerico spesso si identificano;

6) si utilizzano forme deittiche per richiamare oggetti o valori numerici senza ripeterli, allo scopo di alleggerire il dettato ed evitare ambiguità (facilmente generabili all'interno delle relazioni tra le operazioni). Di conseguenza, in casi di occorrenze plurime di valori numerici nella catena di operazioni, dopo la prima

---

75 Il calendario persiano conta a partire dal 16 giugno 632 d. C, data dell'ascesa al trono di Yazdegerd III della dinastia dei Sassanidi. Sui sistemi cronologici antichi cf. V. Grumel, La chronologie. Traité d'études Byzantines. Paris 1958, e S. Stern, Calendars in antiquity: empires, states, and societies. Oxford 2012, 167 – 227.

occorrenza viene assegnato al valore numerico un articolo con funzione anaforica, oppure vengono utilizzati pronomi dimostrativi.

I punti 1–6 possono essere verificati ritornando a leggere i testi A–F, dei quali si offrono di seguito brevi estratti commentati:[76]

Testo A
ἡλίου ἐποχὴ Αἰγοκέρωτος ιβ λζʹ νγʺ (dato iniziale 1; oggetto e valore numerico; identificazione tra i due);

τὰ ἐκ τοῦ κανονίου τῆς τελείας διορθώσεως τῆς ἐποχῆς αὐτοῦ ō κγʺ· (dato iniziale 2; oggetto e valore numerico; identificazione tra i due)

ἄφελε ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ ἡλίου ἐποχῆς· (operazione, in forma verbale imperativo seconda singolare, tra i dati iniziali 2 e 1; quest'ultimo è segnalato tramite espressione denotativa)

Testo F.2
ἑξηκοστὰ κανονίου ἡλίου ἀπὸ ἰσημερίας λδʹ, (dato iniziale 1; oggetto e valore numerico 0; 34; identificazione tra i due)

πλάτος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως μοῖραι με· (dato iniziale 2, utile per ciò che segue)

κανόνιον ἐξάρματος ὧραι γ κηʹ· (dato iniziale 3; identificazione tra i due)

πολλαπλασίασον ἐπὶ τὰ λδʹ· (moltiplicazione, imperativo; l'articolo serve per chiarificare che si tratta del valore numerico presentato tre proposizioni prima).

γίνεται α νζʹ νβʺ· (risultato, 1; 57, 52 espresso col verbo caratteristico)

τὸ τέταρτον τούτων· (divisione in espressione nominale; dimostrativo di portata minima)

κθʹ κηʺ· (valore numerico 0; 29, 28, cioè il risultato; la proposizione, omesso il verbo caratteristico del risultato, coincide col valore numerico)

πρόσθες αὐτοῖς· (addizione; dimostrativo forte, che si riferisce ai valori numerici 1; 57, 52 e 0; 29, 28 delle proposizioni precedenti)

Come per le "procedure", le caratteristiche fondamentali del "linguaggio degli algoritmi" hanno radici nella tradizione matematica greca: le più antiche attestazioni di linguaggio algoritmico sono rintracciabili nei *Metrica* di Erone, dove

76 I valori numerici sono tradotti secondo la notazione di Neugebauer, secondo la quale i gradi sono separati dai sessantesimi tramite punto e virgola, mentre i sessantesimi si trovano alla destra del punto e virgola in ordine decrescente e sono separati da virgola.

gli algoritmi sono impiegati per “sintetizzare” teoremi applicandoli a un caso paradigmatico.[77]

I due linguaggi condividono un lessico povero, inserito in un dettato rigido, che mira alla normatività e in cui è assente la connotazione temporale. La differenza tra i due stili, nel quadro dei manuali per le tavole astronomiche di età bizantina (chiamati anche commentari alle tavole astronomiche), non risiede soltanto nella diversità degli attori linguistici messi in gioco e nell’assenza dell’ipotassi negli algoritmi, bensì nel fatto che agli algoritmi è assegnato un ruolo di sintesi e di completamento delle procedure. Una struttura ricorrente nelle varie parti dei capitoli di un manuale di tavole astronomiche (si rimanda all’inizio di questa sezione) è rintracciabile nelle copie bizantine di questo genere di testi: la ψηφοφορία accompagna sempre uno ὑπόδειγμα; la prima sintetizza il secondo e ne applica la procedura, già esposta a livello generale nella parte pratica, fornendone un caso particolare attraverso un calcolo paradigmatico. Si tratta di un legame tra uno stile che mira al più alto grado di generalità (procedure) e uno che descrive casi particolari (algoritmi) derivati dalle procedure ad essi correlate. Gli algoritmi, dunque, non sussisterebbero senza la procedura generale e costituiscono un supplemento a essa: in assenza di un algoritmo la procedura non perderebbe la propria validità, ma ciò non sarebbe conforme al canone di questo genere di testi. In questo sta la chiave per comprendere il motivo che spinge Bessarione a completare la *Paradosis* tramite l’inserimento dei supplementi algoritmici, poco importa che si tratti di una sua iniziativa personale o di una terza persona: le procedure senza algoritmi sono percepite come incomplete.

Il rapporto tra procedure e algoritmi non deve sorprendere: già nei *Metrica* di Erone gli algoritmi giocano un ruolo di sintesi e devono la loro validità a procedure e teoremi.[78] Nella *Paradosis*, così come nei testi analoghi di età bizantina, non ci sono teoremi da dimostrare, ma solo istruzioni da seguire: esse vengono messe in pratica già nella seconda parte del capitolo, cioè lo ὑπόδειγμα, scritto in stile procedurale; gli algoritmi che lo seguono applicano di nuovo la procedura generale “sintetizzando” i calcoli dello ὑπόδειγμα. Il ruolo di sintesi giocato dagli algoritmi nei confronti delle procedure nei manuali per l’uso delle tavole nella tradizione bizantina è confermato anche dalle porzioni testuali che li introducono, le quali confermano verbalmente il legame con la porzione precedente. Ecco degli esempi tratti dai testi riportati sopra:

---

77 Acerbi, I codici stilistici (come sopra nota 56) 190 – 193; F. Acerbi / B. Vitrac (a cura di), Metrica. Heron d’Alexandrie. Pisa/Roma 2014, 363 – 427.

78 Acerbi, I codici stilistici (come sopra nota 56) 190 e 211 – 213.

Testo A.	ὡς καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐκθέσεως ὑποτέτακται
Testo B.	καὶ δηλοῦσι ταῦτα οἱ ἀριθμοὶ οὓς ὑπετάξαμεν
Testo E.	ὡς καὶ διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀριθμῶν ἐκθέσεως ὑποτέτακται
Testo F.1	καὶ πρὸς πλείονα τῶν ῥηθέντων κατάληψιν καὶ τοὺς ἀριθμοὺς ὑπετάξαμεν

A questo punto è possibile avere un quadro più chiaro dei legami tra i due stili all'interno della *Paradosis*. Il quadro si lascia riassumere in questo modo: gli algoritmi non sussisterebbero senza le procedure; nelle procedure lo ὑπόδειγμα non sussisterebbe senza la parte teorica. Ciò trova riscontro in casi analoghi nelle gerarchie generatesi tra diversi codici stilistici nel corso della trasmissione dei testi della tradizione matematica greca.[79]

I dati ricavati dall'analisi del linguaggio dei supplementi algoritmici mostrano che Bessarione copia, analogamente all'aggiunta del testo di Argiro, scegliendo passi che hanno stile e tematiche comuni con il resto della *Paradosis*. Gli interventi del nostro vanno certamente inquadrati nelle consuete dinamiche della trasmissione dei testi d'uso, ma il motivo che innesca l'aggiunta degli algoritmi è rintracciabile in ultima analisi nel rapporto tra i codici stilistici dei manuali per l'uso delle tavole astronomiche, di cui erano ben a conoscenza dotti e copisti di età paleologa. Ebbene, mentre il testo di Argiro viene aggiunto in un determinato luogo per conformità tematica, per gli algoritmi il copista agisce colmando ciò che avverte come una lacuna seguendo un canone. Di conseguenza, la causa che motiva la copia dei supplementi algoritmici sta nel rapporto tra le procedure e gli algoritmi definito da un canone formatosi nella trasmissione dei manuali per l'uso delle tavole astronomiche. Ciò chiarisce anche la ragione per cui, ai fini del presente articolo, è stato necessario analizzare lo stile dell'aggiunta e dei supplementi pur trattandosi di testi non composti da Bessarione.

7 Sintesi e considerazioni finali

I dati ricavati nelle sezioni 5 e 6 per mezzo del confronto testuale tra il codice Marc. gr. Z. 333 e il Vat. gr. 1059 testimoniano la dipendenza diretta del primo dal secondo rispetto alle porzioni testuali analizzate (l'aggiunta al capitolo sulle congiunzioni lunisolari e i supplementi algoritmici). Di conseguenza si può concludere che Bessarione, mentre copia la *Paradosis* dal testimone Marc. gr. Z.

79 ACERBI, I codici stilistici (come sopra nota 56) 199–211.

323,[80] utilizza il Vat. gr. 1059 del suo maestro come esemplare di controllo. Il sistema di rubriche utilizzato da Bessarione, così come la riorganizzazione strutturale della *Paradosis*, confermano la dipendenza della sua versione dal codice del maestro. Questi elementi inducono a ipotizzare che il lavoro di Bessarione si sia svolto a Costantinopoli sotto la guida di Cortasmeno negli anni '20. A conferma di ciò, le tavole astronomiche a cui si riferisce la *Paradosis* sono calculate a partire dall'anno persiano 795, cioè dal 1425/26 (ad es. f. 200v del Marc. gr. Z 333). Appare meno probabile, se non senz'altro da escludere, che Bessarione abbia lavorato al manuale per le tavole persiane dopo il 1431 a Mistrà. Questa ipotesi richiederebbe che egli avesse portato con sé a Mistrà nel 1431 il Vat. gr. 1059, quando Cortasmeno era probabilmente ancora vivo e attivo. Inoltre, se è noto che Bessarione studiò astronomia a Mistrà presso il maestro Giorgio Gemisto Pletone, non sono tuttavia rintracciabili legami tra il filosofo neoplatonico e la *Paradosis* trascritta da Bessarione: lo studio della tradizione manoscritta della *Paradosis* e del libro III della *Tribiblos* di Meliteniote non ha fatto emergere dati che permettano di ricondurre all'ambiente di Pletone le due opere. Anche se due codici che contengono la *Paradosis*, cioè il Pal. gr. 278 e il Marc. gr. Z. 336, sono anche testimoni del cosiddetto "proto-Pletone" (il testo che Pletone ha utilizzato per redigere il suo trattato sulle congiunzioni lunisolari), il proto-Pletone va molto probabilmente ricollegato all'insegnamento di Cortasmeno, sulla base del testimone contenuto nell'Urb. gr. 80.[81]

Le integrazioni bessarionee alla *Paradosis* potrebbero essere esercizi scolastici composti secondo le direttive di Cortasmeno, poiché sono testi non composti da Bessarione e non riportano nulla di originale dal punto di vista del contenuto, ma i dati ricavati dal presente studio non permettono di avanzare questa ipotesi. Tuttavia è molto probabile che Bessarione operi sotto la guida di un maestro, Cortasmeno: come si è visto nelle sezioni 5 e 6, Bessarione copia dal manoscritto del maestro e lo imita in vari aspetti; secondariamente le integrazioni riflettono un interesse per le congiunzioni e le opposizioni lunisolari (testo della sezione 5 e testo F della sezione 6), e di conseguenza per le eclissi (le prime sono *conditio sine qua non* per le seconde): ciò è di nuovo in accordo con gli interessi di Cortasmeno rilevati dal contenuto del Vat. gr. 1059 (vedi sezione 2).[82]

---

80 Bardi, Persische Astronomie (come sopra nota 2) per il processo di copia.

81 Il cosiddetto proto-Pletone e il trattato astronomico di Pletone sono editi e commentati in Tihon/Mercier, Manuel d'astronomie (come sopra nota 5). Per il legame tra Cortasmeno e il proto-Pletone cf. M. Cacouros, recensione di A. Tihon / R. Mercier (éds.), Georges Gémiste Pléthon, Manuel d'astronomie, in *REB* 57 (1999) 333–335.

82 Caudano, Le calcul (come sopra nota 8) sui calcoli di congiunzioni ed eclissi nel Vat. gr. 1059. Il calcolo di congiunzioni lunisolari e delle eclissi in età paleologa era diventato quasi

L'analisi dei tratti stilistici del testo aggiuntivo e dei supplementi algoritmici ha permesso di comprendere entro quali coordinate si inseriscono gli interventi di Bessarione. Si tratta di una copia eseguita certamente nella cornice di un testo d'uso, ma, nel caso degli algoritmi, secondo regole stabilite dai canoni stilistici della tradizione della matematica greca: una dinamica che non stona affatto in un contesto didattico. Come si è visto, il legame tra il codice stilistico delle procedure e quello degli algoritmi (sezione 6) definivano il formato espositivo dei manuali per l'uso delle tavole astronomiche; Bessarione, di conseguenza, accorgendosi dell'assenza di algoritmi in alcuni capitoli della *Paradosis*, colma la lacuna trascrivendo dal manoscritto del maestro. Bessarione, insomma, ritocca, riorganizza e contamina il testo canonico della *Paradosis* per ottenere una versione più completa. Ciò concorda perfettamente con le intenzioni editoriali di Cortasmeno nel Vat. gr. 1059 (su tutti la riorganizzazione della *Tribiblos* – si veda la sezione 2). È dunque verosimile che Bessarione abbia copiato i testi dal manoscritto del maestro e secondo le istruzioni di quest'ultimo.

Ciò getta nuova luce sull'insegnamento dell'astronomia di Cortasmeno, e si tratta di una testimonianza ricavata da un allievo di eccezione. L'integrazione della *Paradosis* nel Marc. gr. Z. 333 mostra notevoli somiglianze con gli interventi di ristrutturazione dei testi nel Vat. gr. 1059: nel codice di Cortasmeno i testi sono impaginati su due colonne e inframmezzati da porzioni di altri testi a fini di confronto sinottico; la riorganizzazione strutturale delle opere mira alla completezza e a ottenere maggior perspicuità nel dettato: emblematico in questo senso l'inserimento di estratti dal *Piccolo Commentario* di Teone all'interno del trattato di Meliteniote in corrispondenza di capitoli analoghi, così come il confronto sinottico tra i metodi di Teone e Meliteniote per il calcolo delle congiunzioni lunisolari (vedi sezione 2). In questa cornice si inserisce perfettamente la trascrizione di testi unita al confronto di redazioni differenti dello stesso testo (*Tribiblos* e *Paradosis*), come dimostra la copia di Bessarione. Tutto ciò lascia ipotizzare che il metodo del maestro Cortasmeno per l'insegnamento dell'astronomia comportasse un processo di apprendimento basato su attività tra loro complementari, finalizzate all'assimilazione del contenuto.

Gli interventi a completamento della *Paradosis* tramite il codice vaticano di Cortasmeno mostrano che, almeno nella prima metà del XV secolo, i dotti bizantini erano consapevoli che quel testo fosse la versione stilisticamente meno accurata del libro III della *Tribiblos* di Meliteniote. Il testimone di Cortasmeno è

---

una moda tra i dotti e terreno di sfida. Come caso paradigmatico si consideri il ruolo che questa abilità assunse nella controversia tra Niceforo Gregora e Barlaam di Seminara: cf. J. Mogenet / A. Tihon / D. Donnet (eds.), Barlaam de Seminara. Traités sur le éclipses de soleil de 1333 et 1337. Louvain-la-Neuve 1977, 147 – 157.

copiato dall'autografo di Meliteniote (Vat. gr. 792). È dunque ragionevole pensare che Meliteniote abbia agito per la *Paradosis* analogamente a Bessarione, cioè abbia completato i capitoli che percepiva come incompleti. Meliteniote agì anche secondo le proprie esigenze didattiche: il dotto, infatti, era professore alla scuola patriarcale attorno alla metà del XIV secolo (prima del 1368),[83] gli stessi anni della composizione della *Tribiblos*; ciò permette di considerare il libro III della *Tribiblos* come una versione "normalizzata" della *Paradosis*, ad uso scolastico. Di conseguenza, il formato espositivo di un manuale di età paleologa per l'uso di tavole astronomiche in contesto scolastico ufficiale prevede la presenza, a fianco delle procedure, di supplementi algoritmici sia in formato tabellare sia in formato discorsivo. Ciò trova conferma nella configurazione dei trattati riportati nel Vat. gr. 792 e nel Vat. gr. 1059, nei quali si trovano algoritmi in entrambi i formati a seguito delle procedure, talvolta in coppia, ma questo aspetto richiede un supplemento di indagine, perché la tradizione testuale della *Paradosis* e del libro III della *Tribiblos* pone un interrogativo riguardo al linguaggio degli algoritmi: la maggior parte dei testimoni della *Paradosis* riportano algoritmi tabellari, ma non per ciascun capitolo, a fronte di un solo algoritmo in formato discorsivo nel capitolo sull'eclissi lunare. Gli algoritmi in formato tabellare, infatti, come accennato, caratterizzano i manuali per l'uso delle tavole di età bizantina. Il libro III della *Tribiblos*, al contrario, testimonia un uso estensivo dei supplementi algoritmici in formato discorsivo, che non di rado si ritrovano a fianco di quelli tabellari: i primi, dunque, caratterizzano la versione scolastica dell'opera. Come si è visto, le prime tracce del "linguaggio degli algoritmi" risalgono ai *Metrica* di Erone e questo codice stilistico si ritrova nella tradizione della sua opera (tradizione metrologica): si tratta in ogni caso di algoritmi in formato discorsivo.[84] A questo punto occorre spiegare la commistione tra algoritmi discorsivi e tabellari e rintracciare i motivi alla base del ricorso dei manuali bizantini a questo codice stilistico. Si affida questo compito a future indagini: le ricerche in questo campo dovranno prendere in considerazione testi sull'uso delle tavole a partire dall'età alessandrina e considerare anche i manuali astronomici della tradizione islamica; a priori non si può escludere che questi ultimi abbiano avuto qualche influenza nelle scelte stilistico-espositive dei trattatisti bizantini, a maggior ragione se si considera che almeno a partire dalla fine del XIII secolo nel mondo

---

83 Leurquin, Tribiblos. Livre I (come sopra nota 21) 13–19; *PLP* no. 17851.
84 Acerbi/Vitrac, Metrica (come sopra nota 78) per la descrizione del linguaggio nei Metrica di Erone e nella tradizione generata da quest'opera.

bizantino si traducono in greco testi arabi e persiani sull'uso delle tavole astronomiche.[85]

I risultati di questo lavoro mettono per la prima volta in luce dettagli sui legami in materia astronomica tra Cortasmeno e Bessarione, confermando l'ipotesi di Anne-Laurence Caudano in merito all'allestimento del codice Vat. gr. 1059 a scopo didattico.[86] Di conseguenza, l'ipotesi che gli studi astronomici di Bessarione siano cominciati soltanto a partire dal 1431, sotto la guida di Giorgio Gemisto Pletone, è smentita; i primi studi astronomici di Bessarione cominciano a Costantinopoli sotto la guida di Cortasmeno.

---

85 D. Pingree, Gregory Chioniades and Palaeologan Astronomy. *DOP* 18 (1964) 133 – 160; Tihon, Tables persanes (come sopra nota 39); Tihon, Tables islamiques (come sopra nota 49).
86 Caudano, Le calcul (come sopra nota 8) 215 – 218.

 DOI 10.1515/bz-2018-0002 — BZ 2018; 111(1): 39–54

Grigory Benevich

Presence and absence of *προαίρεσις* in Christ and saints according to Maximus the Confessor and parallels in Neoplatonism

Abstract: The article shows that prior to the debate with the Monothelites, Maximus the Confessor followed the Christian tradition going back to Gregory of Nyssa in recognizing the presence of προαίρεσις in Christ and the saints. Later during the debate, Maximus declined to apply προαίρεσις to Christ and started to speak about the deactivation of προαίρεσις in the saints in the state of deification. Maximus was the first Orthodox author who distinguished deliberate choice (προαίρεσις) and natural will (θέλημα), and defended the presence of natural will in Christ according to His humanity. At the same time, the opposition of desire (βούλησις) and deliberate choice (προαίρεσις) can be found in some Neoplatonists, such as Iamblichus, Proclus, and Philoponus. Iamblichus and Proclus rejected the presence of προαίρεσις in the gods and god-like humans, admitting only the presence of βούλησις – the desire for the Good. Thus, the evolution of the doctrine of Maximus the Confessor, regarding the application of προαίρεσις to Christ and the saints, finds a parallel doctrine (and even possibly a source) in Neoplatonism.

Adresse: Dr. Grigory Benevich, Russian Christian Academy for the Humanities, St.-Petersburg, Russia; benevitch@mail.ru

The idea that Christ according to His humanity lacked gnomic will and deliberate choice, which appears in the writings of Maximus the Confessor from the time of his controversy with the Monothelites, as well as Maximus' doctrine of natural will and volitional act in general, has been repeatedly attracting the attention of scholars in recent years. It is not the purpose of this study to overview the current research on the subject.[1] In the present article, I would firstly like to propose

1 I should mention only a few of the most important recent studies from my point of view: I. McFarland, 'Naturally and by grace:' Maximus the Confessor on the operation of the will. *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58/4 (2005) 410 – 433; idem, Willing is not choosing: some anthropological implications of dyothelite Christology. *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9/1

some possible sources for the doctrine of Maximus of the earlier period, attributing προαίρεσις to the humanity of Christ, and, secondly, to address Maximus' writings from the time of his controversy with the Monothelites, in which Maximus rejected the notion of προαίρεσις in Christ and the saints, and asserted the presence of natural human will. Finally, my article will argue that some parallels in the teaching of Maximus of the later period, new to the Christian tradition, can be found in the Neoplatonist authors.

The coherence of Maximus' teaching and its possible sources

It is well known that in his writings written before the controversy with the Monothelites, Maximus applied γνώμη and προαίρεσις to Christ according to His humanity – see *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* (*Or. dom.*) 135 – 138 and *Questions to Thalassius* (*Thal.*) 42.18 – 34, respectively. Thus, in the passage from the *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*, Maximus not only applied γνώμη to Christ, but also stated that Christ chose death for the people instead of life (in the passage Maximus did not discuss the prayer in Gethsemane directly, but likely implied it):

> The [Incarnated Word] restores the [human] nature in its original form … in that by becoming Man, He retained the will (γνώμην), free from passions and uninclined to revolt, unshaken in its natural essence against the crucifiers, but instead having chosen death for them instead of life (αἱρουμένην ἀντὶ ζωῆς τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν θάνατον). From this philanthropic disposition (διαθέσει) of the Suffering One [to the crucifiers], it can be seen that He suffered voluntarily (ἑκούσιον).[2]

(2007) 3 – 23; IDEM, The theology of the will, in P. Allen / B. Neil (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Maximus the Confessor. Oxford 2015, 516 – 532; D. BRADSHAW, Maximus the Confessor on the will, in Bishop Maximus (Vasiljević) (ed.), Knowing the purpose of creation through the resurrection. Proceedings of the Symposium on St Maximus the Confessor, Belgrade, October 18 – 21, 2012. *Contemporary Christian Thought*, 30. Alhambra, CA / Belgrade 2013, 143 – 157. For the critical discussion of some of Bradshaw's points, see G. I. BENEVICH, Предисловие [Preface], in idem (ed.), Преподобный Максим Исповедник. Богословско-полемические сочинения, trans. D. A. Chernoglazov / A. M. Choufrine. *Smaragdos Philocalias*, 15. Mount Athos / St. Petersburg 2014, 127 – 29. Among the most recent studies I would like to mention B. LOURIÉ, A freedom beyond conflict: the logic of internal conflict and the free will in Maximus the Confessor. *Scrinium* 14 (2018, forthcoming).

2 Maxim. *Or. dom.* 135 – 142 (VAN DEUN).

However, in his writings from the period of the controversy with the Monothelites, Maximus most certainly rejected the gnomic or choosing will in Christ as well as His deliberate choice. Can these positions be reconciled with each other? The answer is to be found in Maximus' understanding of the gnomic will and deliberate choice. Maximus closely associated both notions with ignorance of the true good, which caused hesitation in making decision and created the possibility of sin. Such hesitation could not take place in Christ, since His human nature existed in the hypostasis of the Divine Logos. At the same time, this did not negate Christ's act of making a decision in Gethsemane – the act of agreeing with the will of the Father and His own divine will – in accepting the Cross. In Christ, the process of making this decision was different from regular decision-making among created and undeified human hypostases, who typically exhibit hesitation, doubt, or deliberation (evaluation), as Maximus described in detail in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* and *Opusc*. 1. According to the later writings of Maximus, Christ made the choice without choosing.[3] This choosing takes place in the mode of implementing human free will (as the highest component of natural will),[4] which is called gnomic will (formed in the created hypostasis) and deliberate choice.

If we turn to the passage from the *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* cited above, it becomes clear that the concept of will (γνώμη) which has chosen (αἱρουμένην) death for the salvation of the people instead of life, should not be based on the meaning of γνώμη, which can be found in the much later *Disputation with Pyrrhus*, that is, in the sense close to the gnomic will and deliberate choice, intrinsic for created undeified hypostases. Prior to the polemics with the Monothelites, Maximus made no distinction between γνώμη and gnomic will on the one hand, and natural will on the other hand.

According to I. McFarland, who analyzed the pertinent passages from the relatively early works of Maximus, where the concept of γνώμη was used (such as *Ep*. 2), in general he more or less equated γνώμη and will, and understood the Fall as the event in which will came into disagreement with nature. In the process of redemption, the will entered into renewed agreement with nature through deification, which led to the unity with the divine will.[5]

---

3 I owe this expression as well as this consideration to Arkadi Choufrine.

4 Based on the definition of free will, which Maximus ascribed to Diadochus of Photike: "free will is the will (θέλησις) of the rational soul". With some variations this definition occurs at least twice in the writings of Maximus: *PG* 91, 277C and 301C.

5 McFarland, Naturally and by grace (as footnote 1 above) 414.

In fact, in his *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*, referring to the mission of Christ and the state which He granted to us in Himself, Maximus used the concepts of γνώμη (will) and nature (φύσις), stating that Christ

> … has reconciled us through Himself to the Father and with each other. And we do not have the will (γνώμην) which resists the *logos* of nature (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς φύσεως) any longer, but both according to nature and will (γνώμην) we remain unsusceptible to change (ἀναλλοιώτους).[6]

Accordingly, Maximus saw the state of healing of this separation in such a way that the discord in γνώμη had been terminated, and instead the unity of all people with each other and with God had taken place in γνώμη and θέλημα. Clearly, the γνώμη of Christ, about which Maximus spoke in *Or. dom.* 135 – 138, is the same will in which all who are being saved are united, because all of them (just as Christ according to His humanity) desire the same things that God wants, and all of them have the same direction of will. This, in short, must have been the concept of γνώμη in the earlier writings of Maximus.

Thus, the application of γνώμη to the humanity of Christ in the earlier works of Maximus may confirm that even in the early period Maximus recognized the presence of the volitional principle in Christ according to His human nature, although did not call it natural will and did not distinguish it from the gnomic will as he did later in the writings from the time of his debate with the Monothelites. Moreover, as we can see, in the earlier period Maximus thought primarily in terms of will (γνώμη) / nature and not in terms of natural will / gnomic will as in the later works.[7] Keeping that in mind, I believe that we cannot conclude from

---

6 Maximus, *Or. dom.* 148 – 152 (van Deun).

7 McFarland, Naturally and by grace (as footnote 2 aboe) 415. Here we may point to what seems to be a still unused source for the concept of natural will in Maximus in the context of distinction between natural will as a natural faculty and its use in a particular situation. This distinction can be already found in Origen's *De principii*. Maximus must have certainly known the passage either from its original source, or from the *Philokalia*, compiled by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, where Origen's passage became a part of a well-known argument in the section On the free will (Περὶ αὐτεξουσίου). Interpreting the words of the Apostle Paul, which Origen somewhat modified, "… to will and to act is from God" ("τὸ θέλειν δὲ καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν"; cf. Phil 2: 13, originally, in a somewhat more "deterministic" formulation, "θεὸς … ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας"; see Origen, *De principiis* III.1.19.1 – 2 = Origen, *Philocalia* 21.19.1 – 2), long before Maximus, Origen made a distinction between natural will and energy, which were given to us by God, and how we used them (χρώμεθα) without, however, using these terms. Origen stated that God gave us volition as an ability typical for all human beings, "to will generally" (τὸ καθόλου θέλειν; Ori-

Maximus' earlier works that in his doctrine (taken as a whole) γνώμη and προαίρεσις could be applied to Christ in the sense which Maximus invested in these terms later during the controversy with the Monothelites. However, there should be no doubts that according to Maximus γνώμη and προαίρεσις could be applied to Christ in the sense he implied prior to his debate with the Monothelites.

In *Opusc.* 1, Maximus had to respond to why, if he now rejected προαίρεσις in Christ, he applied the notion to Christ in *Thal.* 42. As Maximus explained, προαίρεσις in this context should be understood either in the sense of a relative assimilation, that is, not in the strict sense, taking Christ according to His humanity as "a man like us" who in Gethsemane was in the process of choosing between adherence to His own will and submission to the will of God, or in the sense of human natural will (which according to Maximus, in Christ was deified).[8]

In my view, the designation of the willing principle in Christ according to His humanity by the terms of γνώμη and προαίρεσις in the earlier writings of Maximus follows a certain tradition going back to St. Gregory of Nyssa. Thus, St. Gregory applied προαίρεσις to the humanity of Christ in his polemics with Apollinaris, albeit indirectly, starting from Apollinaris' denial of the mind in Christ. Gregory's logic was the following: if Christ did not have a human mind, He would not have had volition, yet anyone devoid of volition could not consciously strive for the good:

> So how does the author attribute non-compulsion to that which is devoid of volition (τῷ ἀπροαιρέτῳ) and in which there is no self-reflection, which would guide it to the good? For sinlessness, dependent not on volition (προαιρέσεως), certainly, does not deserve praise.[9]

By applying προαίρεσις to the human nature of Christ, Maximus intended to emphasize in the volitional principle of the human nature the principle responsible for the direction of will, which was unalterably good in Christ and changeable in

gen, *Philocalia*, 21.19.13), or "in the generic sense (τὸ γενικόν)," but how we use this ability – for good or for evil – in each particular case depends on us (Origen, *De principiis*, III.1.19).

8 Maximus, *Opusc.* 1, *PG* 91, 29D–32A.

9 Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Apollinarem* 3,1.213.1, ed. F. Mueller. Raimond Laird recently has made an attempt to show that John Chrysostom was a substantial predecessor of Maximus the Confessor in the use of "γνώμη" in his ascetic and moral teaching: R. Laird, Mindset (γνώμη) in John Chrysostom, in Allen / Neil, Handbook (as footnote 1 above), 194 – 211. However, though some parallels with Chrysostom can be found in Maximus' ascetic teaching, there is no clear evidence for his influence on Maximus in Christology. Gregory of Nyssa was much more important theologian for him, and I am sure that at least in his early Christology applying προαίρεσις to Christ, Maximus followed the Christian tradition going back to Gregory of Nyssa.

an undeified person, but in any case belonged to the realm of free will. Thus, Gregory of Nyssa argued in a similar way:

> The soul, having come into being in the way the Creator desired, by the very power to choose (κατ' ἐξουσίαν αὐτὴν αἱρεῖσθαι) what she likes (τὸ κατὰ γνώμην), becomes by the power of volition (ἐκ τῆς προαιρετικῆς δυνάμεως) that which it desired (ἐθέλει).[10]

By this logic and in this conceptual framework, the presence of a rational soul in the human nature of Christ (and that point was defended by Gregory in the controversy with Apollinaris) also presupposed the existence of γνώμη and προαίρεσις. This is why, as I believe, Maximus applied these notions to Christ in his writings prior to the controversy with the Monothelites.

In fact, in *Thal.* 42 Maximus explicitly attributed προαίρεσις to Christ according to His humanity and wrote about the unalterably good volition of the human nature of Christ, contrasting it to the volition of Adam, which turned out to be corruptible:

> Because of the passionate principle, He became sin for our sake according to [His human] nature, not knowing a deliberately chosen sin (γνωμικὴν ἁμαρτίαν) due to the inalterability of His volition (διὰ τὴν ἀτρεψίαν τῆς προαιρέσεως). By that inalterability of volition [the Lord] repaired the passionate principle of substance, having made the end of it (I mean, death) the beginning of transformation into incorruptibility. Thus, just as the nature of all people changed from incorruption to corruption through one man who willingly (ἑκουσίως) turned his volition (προαίρεσιν) away from the good, the restoration of nature from corruptibility into incorruptibility for all people happened through one man Jesus Christ who did not turn away [his] volition (προαίρεσιν) from the good.[11]

In accordance with tradition, Maximus probably understood this inalterability of Christ's volition according to His humanity (which entirely and thus along with His will was assumed into the hypostasis of the Word), as having occurred according to deification.[12]

---

10 Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione*, *PG* 46, 120.32–36.

11 Maximus, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 42.22–34 (Laga/Steel).

12 Maximus most certainly knew the words of Gregory of Nazianzus, "His volition as wholly deified, was not opposing (ὑπεναντίον) to God" (Gregory of Nazianzus, *De filio* 2, or. 30.12.6). In *Opusc.* 1 Maximus said that "the human part of God" "received existence in its conjunction with God the Word (and) acquired [the movement] which knows no hesitation, or rather a steady movement according to its natural desire (or to say it simply, volition), or more precisely the immovable state (στάσιν ἀκίνητον) in God the Word Himself, completely deified in accordance with its unmixed with anything actualization in Him" (*PG* 91, 32A).

Later, during the debate with the Monothelites, Maximus was forced to explain why the presence of the human will, rational and free, in Christ's process of decision making in Gethsemane could not lead to discord with the divine will, even at temporary manifestation of the human will according to the old *tropos* in agony and evasion (which Maximus repeatedly treated in the above passages of *Or. dom*. 135 – 138 and *Thal*. 42.22 – 34). It was then that Maximus had to say that the process of decision making by Christ was different than it happened with us – there was no *choosing*, which Maximus at that time described using the concepts of intent (γνώμη) (that is, one or another disposition or stable inclinations which the natural will received in created hypostases as their "personal" features), gnomic will, and deliberate choice (προαίρεσις), and distinguished them from natural will. Thus, the initial ideas about unalterably good volition in Christ (as in *Thal*. 42.18 – 34) and γνώμη, which chose (αἱρουμένην) death for the people instead of surviving (as in *Or. dom*. 135 – 138), were reinterpreted in new terms in which human natural will (and not volition as it was before) became deified in Christ, while Maximus began to follow a new understanding of γνώμη, gnomic will, and deliberate choice, as the modes of actualization of natural will resulting from the fall of the progenitors. Even though Maximus admitted their relative assimilation by Christ, he rejected their assimilation according to nature (in the strict sense) since the deification of the human will in Christ excluded them. The terminology changed, but the essence of the doctrine of Maximus remained unchanged, although it became enriched by a more detailed analysis of the Gethsemane prayer.

In addition to the consequences for Christology, the new terminology and conceptual system of Maximus had its implication for soteriology. Thus, in *Opusc*. 1 Maximus described the state of perfect deification as the state with no gnomic will and deliberate choice;[13] in that state the change from virtue to vice, that is, changeability related to the things in our control (and gnomic will acts exactly on that kind of things) is no longer possible.

Thus, if Maximus rejected the presence of gnomic will in Christ, then the human will in the saints, who reached the state of complete deification (when there is no ignorance and changes from good-being to the evil-being, but ever-good-being is granted by God) – the same will that Christ had from the moment of Incarnation – becomes deified and unified with the will of God. In this way the complete participation of saints in the Body of Christ whose inalienable members they are, is accomplished. Those who become deified in Christ are granted the way out of the state of hesitation, doubt, and uncertainty about

13 Maxim. *Opusc*. 1, *PG* 91, 24CD.

the outcome – all those which mark our choices, that is, the process of a regular human *choosing*.

At the time of his polemics with the Monothelites Maximus began to speak about the absence of γνώμη and προαίρεσις in the saints in the state of deification, while he described the state of deification somewhat differently prior to the onset of the debate, for example, by saying that the volition of the saints became unalterable because of deification.[14] This means that γνώμη and προαίρεσις (in the sense they had had at the time) were not denied in the earlier period as applied to Christ or to the saints, and Maximus only said that saints became unshakable in Goodness. At the same time we should not forget that in the early period Maximus professed the doctrine of the "unified energy of God and the saints"[15] in the state of deification, and it is within the context of this doctrine, that is, proceeding from the concept of complete deification of the volitional principle in the saints (when free will was fully given up to the will of God), that Maximus spoke about γνώμη and προαίρεσις, unshakable in Goodness. Thus, there are no differences in the essence of the doctrine in the early and later works of Maximus.

Going back to the differences in the formulations of the doctrine, we may say that the idea that the saints in the state of deification had their volition anchored in God, which we find in Maximus prior to the debate with the Monothelites, was probably adopted from Gregory of Nyssa who expressed, for example, the following thought:

> Because vice does not occur outside of volition (ἔξω τῆς προαιρέσεως), then, when all volition (προαίρεσις) is in God (ἐν τῷ Θεῷ), vice will come to complete destruction, since it will remain without receptacle.[16]

However, later, during the debate with the Monothelites, Maximus had to "shift" his doctrine towards a clearer formulation (also at the terminological level) from

---

14 Idem, *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 6.28 – 38.

15 Maximus, *Ambigua* 7, *PG* 91, 1076AB.

16 Gregory of Nyssa, *De anima et resurrectione*, *PG* 46, 101.5 – 8. I shall not dwell on the (after Polycarp Sherwood's study) well-known fact that the doctrines of the earlier Maximus and St. Gregory should not be equated, since turning to the Good in St. Gregory implied the aversion from evil, that is, some experience of it, and in this sense προαίρεσις, fastened in God, had a meaning of choosing goodness instead of evil. In contrast, in Maximus already in a relatively early period, striving for the Good and existence in Goodness did not imply any comparison with evil – Goodness is absolute, and its desire was naturally embedded in our nature; see P. Sherwood, The earlier Ambigua of S. Maximus the Confessor and his refutation of Origenism. *Studia Anselmiana*, 36. Roma 1955, 198 – 204.

the doctrine of Gregory (although Maximus did not speak directly about it).[17] In doing so Maximus made a substantial distinction between προαίρεσις (which he in his later works denied for Christ and the saints in the state of deification and resurrection) and free will (αὐτεξούσιον), which Maximus recognized in Christ both according to His divinity and humanity, and the saints. As Maximus wrote in *Amb*. 7, even though in the saints free will was voluntarily and completely surrendered to God, it "perfectly reigned (καλῶς βασιλεύοντος)" being under God's reign.[18]

Parallels in the Neoplatonic philosophy

Having made this brief overview of a wider picture of applying προαίρεσις to the humanity of Christ and to the saints in Maximus, I should mention a remarkable parallel to this doctrine in the Neoplatonic philosophy of the fifth and sixth centuries. We should probably speak not about Maximus borrowing from the Neo-

17 As it is well known, Maximus esteemed Gregory of Nyssa and preferred not to criticize him even on the issue of *apokatastasis*, but to reinterpret his teaching, rescuing it from criticism on the part of radical fighters against Origenism.

18 Maximus, *Ambigua* 7, *PG* 91, 1076B. On this matter, see Sherwood, Ambigua (as footnote 16 above), 198–200. An important issue can be raised in this context about the relation between human will and God's Providence. Maximus emphasized that God's Providence does not only work on the level of the things that do not depend on us. Thus in 642 he wrote to a patrician George: "Making difference between things that depend on us and what does not depend on us, let us believe that the fulfilment of the second [i.e. of what does not depend on us] entirely depends on God's Providence, while the fulfilment of the first [i.e. of what depends on us] besides God's Providence depends also on our will (γνώμη)" (Maximus, Epistula 1, *PG* 91, 368D). Therefore in the sphere of things that depend on us, that is, in the area of vices and virtues, a kind of interaction between our will and God's Providence either does occur or does not. However, this interaction is not reduced in Maximus to a banal cooperation. Here Maximus's teaching on the act of volition, elaborated in the context of polemics against the Monothelites, and his teaching on deification must be studied along with his teaching on God's Providence. On the one hand, in Maximus the doctrine of the "natural virtues" can be found – the virtuous life is a life according to the logos of nature, God's will about it, or God's Providence (see idem, *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, *PG* 91, 309C). On the other hand, he also emphasized that after the Fall we are easily separated by intention (γνώμη) from the logos of our nature. The possibility to sin is abolished only in the state of deification when our will is freely and entirely delivered to God, united with God's will and moved by it. In this state of deification, using Maximus's words, there is "the immediate union with Providence of those whom this Providence knew before" (idem, *Ad Thalassi*um 65.550–552 [Laga/Steel]). Or in other words, God's Providence, identical with God's will, is fulfilled; the very possibility to sin is abolished.

platonists (the substantial differences, as we will see, are preserved),[19] but rather about some parallels, drawn on common sources in classical philosophy, which are even more interesting because they make it possible to get a better understanding of similarities and differences in the doctrine of Maximus not only as compared to the previous Christian tradition, for example, to Gregory of Nyssa, but also to the pagan philosophical thought of Late Antiquity.

Scholars several times pointed out that the very distinction between natural will and deliberate choice, which was made by Maximus, probably went back to the distinction between the notions of προαίρεσις and βούλησις (desire) in Aristotle.[20] In the Patristic tradition this distinction can be found in Nemesius of Emesa[21] who repeated Aristotle on this point. Maximus largely relied on Nemesius in his theory of volitional act; particularly when using this distinction, Maximus rejected προαίρεσις in Christ or spoke about the absence of προαίρεσις in the saints after the resurrection.

Long before Maximus, however, the same distinction was used by Proclus. Proclus left us some important statements which shed light on his understanding of what did not depend and did depend on us in his treatise *On the providence,* arguing with the mechanic Theodorus who adhered to a deterministic doctrine and asserted that only the Guardian (προστάτης) of all beings possessed the freedom which Theodorus identified as "that which depends on us" (ἐφ' ἡμῖν), and everything in our world was determined by that Guardian. First, Proclus referred to Aristotle's distinction which also occurs in Nemesius,

> the ancients always take the expression 'depending on us' as referring to the act of choosing … They did not identify choice (προαίρεσις) and desire (βούλησις): they said that desire is always turned to good, while choice may be turned to good and bad things."[22]

---

19 Some influence cannot be entirely excluded. Maximus, for example, might have known the writings of John Philoponus, which we will discuss below.

20 Aristotle, EN. III, 4.1111b.20 – 25. See Bradshaw, Maximus (as footnote 1 above) 145 and V.V. Petroff, Arist. Nicom. Ethic. III 4, 1111b4 – 7, 1113b22 как источник концептуального аппарата в учении Максима Исповедника о волении и волевом акте [Arist. Nicom. Ethic. III 4, 1111b4 – 7, 1113b22 as the source of the conceptual apparatus in Maximus the Confessor's teaching about will and volitional act]. *ΣΧΟΛΗ. Ancient Philosophy and the Classical tradition* 11/2 (2017) 393 – 406.

21 Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 32 (Einarson).

22 Proclus, *De providentia* 57, p. 68 (Steel). Hereafter the works of Proclus are cited according to these editions: Proclus, Trois études sur la providence. Tome II: 2e étude: Providence, fatalité, liberté, éd. D. Isaac. 2nd ed. Paris 2003; Proclus, On providence, ed. C. Steel. London / Ithaca, NY 2007.

Having made this distinction, Proclus, who virtually equated the realm of προαίρεσις with the realm of "that which depends on us,"[23] further argued that deliberate choice (προαίρεσις) was unnatural for the gods – they only had the desire (βούλησις), directed towards the Good.[24] Accordingly, it would be a mistake to consider, as the opponent of Proclus did, that only the gods had control over "what was depending on us," understood as the entirely undetermined freedom, but everything was determined in our world. The notion of desire (βούλησις), just like προαίρεσις, had to be used properly. If the gods did not have deliberate choice, but only good will (desire, βούλησις), human beings as located on the border of the spiritual (intellectual) and material worlds, were involved in the process of choosing between the two worlds. It was not the choice between good and evil, since no one, as Proclus stressed, chooses evil.[25] The choice of the evil was made by the soul due to her ignorance of the true good. We may recall that in the *Disputation with Pyrrhus* Maximus gave the following definition of γνώμη, "intention is nothing else but some volition (θέλησις) with respect to adhering to a real or imaginary good."[26] We may find a similar understanding of προαίρεσις in Proclus.[27] It is important that this definition mentions imaginary goodness in addition to real goodness.

A person can make mistakes, and the possibility of error is embedded in both the definition of γνώμη given by Maximus above and in the notion of προαίρεσις in Proclus. Proclus says that according to her nature, the soul has an inner love for the true Good, but she does not know what it really is and often makes mistakes. As long as προαίρεσις (or rather, the choice made by it) deserves reproach or praise, the προαιρετικόν, our power of choice, belongs to the realm where mistake is possible, which is not the case either with the gods or with irrational beings. This is a unique feature of the human condition in the hierarchy of beings which the Neoplatonists employed. According to Proclus, προαίρεσις was fundamentally dual: if we move towards the better, we behave as rational beings; if we move towards the worse (mistakenly taking it for the better), we behave as

---

23 Cf. "the capacity of choosing and that which depends on us seem to be identical" (Proclus, *De providentia* 59, p. 69).
24 Proclus, *De providentia* 57, p. 68.
25 Ibid.
26 Maxim. *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, *PG* 91, 308C.
27 See Proclus, *De providentia* 58, p. 69. If in Aristotle βούλησις can be directed both to the real and to the imaginary good (Aristoteles, *EN* 1113a15 – 25), in Proclus βούλησις (just as natural will in Maximus) was directed to the good (cf. also Plato, *Gorgias* 468C; rep. 505D–E), but προαίρεσις in Proclus as well as γνώμη and προαίρεσις in Maximus were related to real or imaginary good.

beings of the senses.[28] If we could only live according to the desire of the mind, we would have lived in accordance with the Good and would have been genuinely free and godlike.[29] Such is the life of the gods and the souls which have become similar to them. As for the ordinary people, they typically stay in the realm of choosing which depends on us. And only that which pertains to our soul, that is, to the scope of προαίρεσις, fully depends on us.[30]

The tendency to oppose desire (βούλησις) and deliberate choice (προαίρεσις) can be traced in Neoplatonism since Iamblichus, who, for example, wrote, "The divine desire (θεία βούλησις) of the good exceeds the life according to deliberate choice (τῆς προαιρετικῆς ὑπερέχει ζωῆς)."[31] Thus, already in Iamblichus, desire described the life of the gods (and mind), while προαίρεσις described the life of the soul in the body. Proclus continued and developed that tradition.

Finally, we should turn to John Philoponus, who was a student of Ammonius, the disciple of Proclus, and an important representative of late Neoplatonism and the Alexandrian School of commentaries on Aristotle. According to some suggestions, Maximus might have known the philosophical works of Philoponus.[32] Philoponus used the distinction βούλησις–προαίρεσις when he discussed the power of the human soul:

---

28 Proclus, *De providentia* 60, p. 69.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., 61, p. 70. For a more detailed study of this issue in Proclus and some other Neoplatonic philosophers see: C. Steel, Human or divine freedom: Proclus on what is up to us, in P. Destrée / R. Salles / M. Zingano (eds.), What is up to us? Studies on agency and responsibility in ancient philosoph. Sankt Augistin 2014, 311 – 328.

31 Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 1.12.8 – 9 (des Places). The concept of the "divine desire" had a great importance in the theurgy of Iamblichus. Thus, just after the above quote, Iamblichus added, "because of this desire the gods as being merciful and benevolent, abundantly outpour light on the theurgists, calling up their souls to them, giving them unification with them, and teaching them, even though they are residing in bodies, to separate from the bodies and turn to their eternal intelligible principle" (ibid., 9 – 12).

32 Modern scholars, albeit with some reservations, link the philosophical education of Maximus with Stephen of Alexandria, the last head of the Alexandrian School of philosophy (Stephen himself was likely a student of Philoponus, see T. Tollefsen, The Christocentric cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor. Oxford 2008, 15 – 16). Maximus might have studied under Stephen in Constantinople where, according to some accounts, Stephen was invited by the Emperor Heraclius (if Maximus indeed lived in Constantinople). However, if Maximus (as the Syrian Psogos says) was of Palestinian origin and left Palestine after the Persian invasion, moving for a while to Alexandria (C. Boudignon, Le pouvoir de l'anathème: ou Maxime le Confesseur et les moines palestiniens du VIIe siècle, in A. Camplani / G. Filoramo, eds., Foundations of power and conflicts of authority in late-antique monasticism. Proceedings of the International Seminar, Turin, December 2 – 4, 2004. *Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta*, 157. Louvain/Paris/Dudley 2007, 245 – 274), he might have been in contact with Alexandrian philosophers and had access to a library

> The practical powers of the soul are desire and deliberate choice (βούλησις καὶ προαίρεσις). Desire is directed only to the good, whereas deliberate choice is a selection of the alternate (or ambivalent – ἐπαμφοτερίζει). Desire (βούλησις) belongs to the rational soul herself and by herself, but deliberate choice (προαίρεσις) of the soul is intertwined (συμπεπλεγμένης) with irrationality (τῇ ἀλογίᾳ). And when the soul abides outside the realm of becoming, it acts only in accordance with desire, because she is solely in goodness; but when she finds herself in the realm of becoming, irrational capacities (or powers) intertwine with her … it is then that she, being intertwined with the irrational soul, has deliberate choice, since it happens sometimes from irrationality and sometimes from reason, and prefers one to the other.[33]

In *De anim.* 2.2 241.7–9, Philoponus adds that the mind is practical "due to its relation with the body, this is why after its release from the body it is solely contemplative."

With all differences in nuances of doctrines elaborated by the authors above who represent the Neoplatonic tradition, they all put the existence of προαίρεσις in direct connection with the reality of the human existence in this world, reserving a hierarchically higher place for desire (βούλησις). It is exactly βούλησις (the will of the mind, its desire towards the Goodness, and only to Goodness) that is typical for the gods and for man inasmuch as he is a contemplator, that is, "mind," not intertwined with irrational powers, bodily and material.

We should mention that Nemesius of Emesa, who was influenced by Platonic thought, also argued about the possibility of unshakable anchoring in Goodness in case of withdrawing from practical life and focusing on sole contemplation. This immutability is typical for the state of angels, turned to the contemplation of God, as well as contemplators among the people, who become similar to angels:

> All such incorporeal natures as are concerned in mundane affairs, and descend to taking a share with men in their deeds, are mutable above all other beings of their kind. On the other hand, those whose incorporeal nature is so high as to be relatively near to God, enjoy blessedness in contemplating him. They are concerned only with their personal relation to God, and have weaned themselves completely from everything to do with passing activity and with matter. So they have become more and more habituated to contemplation and to God, and rest immutable. While, because they are rational, they have free-will (αὐτεξούσιοι), they are, for the reason given, in no wise mutable (ἄτρεπτοι). Nor need we marvel. For

in Alexandria. In any case, Abba Sophronius, the future Patriarch of Jerusalem, with whom Maximus was closely connected, possibly before Carthage but definitely after his relocation to Carthage, certainly was in good relations with Stephen.

33 John Philoponus, *In de anima*15.5.25–33 (Hayduck).

> those from among men who have given themselves to contemplation (θεωρητικοί), and have severed themselves from affairs (πρακτῶν), have continued unchanging.[34]

However, in spite of making distinction between βούλησις and προαίρεσις, when speaking about reaching immutability in God, Nemesius did not connect that directly with the lack of προαίρεσις, but rather adheres to terminology close to that of Gregory of Nyssa.

The concept of the lack of προαίρεσις in Christ just as the lack of προαίρεσις in the saints in the state of deification-resurrection, which Maximus offered in the controversy with the Monothelites, to a large extent was similar to that Neoplatonic doctrine, if only we replace the "desire" of the Neoplatonists (βούλησις) to the "natural will" (θέλημα). The difference is that the Neoplatonists did not anticipate the possibility that a man might live on earth, who from birth would not and could not have προαίρεσις, as Maximus thought about Christ. However, He was not just a man, but God incarnate, so we should rather speak about the absence of the doctrine of Incarnation in Neoplatonism, with its entire soteriological meaning typical for Christians. As for the lack of προαίρεσις in the saints in the state of deification-resurrection, as Maximus taught, the state of deification and striving for Goodness alone without the possibility of mistake in choosing Goodness is something common that we find in the understanding of the divine life both in the Neoplatonists (according to whom the souls of people who separated from the material and carnal, and strived for the One, might be partakers of such a life) and in Maximus.

Maximus described that state as a state in which "there is no … deliberate choice, because there is no longer duplicity in that which exists;" in that state, Maximus said:

> Only the desire of mind will act (for those who are capable of such a desire according to nature), having unspeakably reached the only pleasure which is accessible to the initiated, the pleasure of that which is the subject of desire according to nature.[35]

"Striving of the mind" here is extremely reminiscent of the state of divine life which the Neoplatonists also spoke about. This comparison is of special interest because modern Maximus' scholarship pays much attention to his place in the

---

34 Nemesius, *De natura hominis* 40.45 – 56 (Einarson); trans. W. Telfer, Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa. *The Library of Christian Classics*, 4. Philadelphia 1955, 419.

35 Maximus, Opusc. 1, *PG* 91, 24C.

history of philosophy and particularly to his relationship with Neoplatonic thought.[36]

---

36 See S. Mitralexis / G. Steiris / S. Lalla (eds.), Maximus the Confessor as a European philosopher. Oregon 2017. The aim of the papers collected in this volume particularly was to bring forth the links between Maximian thought and the Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism of his era. However, the theme of my present article was not represented in this volume.

DE GRUYTER DOI 10.1515/bz-2018-0003 — BZ 2018; 111(1): 55–70

Sviatoslav Dmitriev

John Lydus' knowledge of Latin and language politics in sixth-century Constantinople

Abstract: This article contextualizes an old debate about the extent of knowledge of Latin by John Lydus, a state official and an erudite from sixth-century Constantinople, within a broader issue of the role of Latin in early Byzantium. It is argued here that Lydus' startling etymological explanations had no relation to his level of knowledge of Latin, but reflected the declining official use of Latin in Byzantium by resurrecting the theory about Latin as a dialect of Greek.

Adresse: Sviatoslav Dmitriev, Department of History, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, USA; dmitriev@bsu.edu

One advantage that John Lydus, an erudite and state official in Constantinople during the reigns of Anastasius, Justin I, and Justinian I, held over his contemporaries was his knowledge of Latin. "Already in the sixth century a knowledge of Latin was growing unusual even among educated men. The author Johannes Lydus tells us that he owed his rise in the civil service mainly to this rare accomplishment," noted Charles W. C. Oman in his pioneering and still captivating history of the Byzantine Empire.[1] Many have found Lydus' information about his knowledge of Latin to be contradictory. On the one hand, he offers several proofs of his good command of the language. Lydus mentions it as the reason for his career advancement (*De mag*. 3.20, 3.27), points out to Justinian's request that he compose and deliver a laudatory speech for that emperor, evidently in Latin, in the presence of ambassadors from the city of Rome (*De mag*. 3.28),

1 C.W.C. Oman, The Byzantine Empire. London 1892, 143. The following abbreviations and editions of Lydus' works have been used: *De mens.:* Ioannis Lydi Liber De mensibus, ed. R. Wünsch. Leipzig 1898; *De ost.:* Ioannis Laurentii Lydi Liber de ostentis ex codicibus italicis auctus et calendaria graeca omnia, ed. C. Wachsmuth. Leipzig 1863; *De mag.* (translated here as *On Powers*): Jean le Lydien, Des magistratures de l'état romain, ed. M. Dubuisson / J. Schamp. Paris 2006; with the English translation by A.C. Bandy (ed.), John the Lydian, *On powers, or The magistracies of the Roman state*. Philadelphia 1983, with occasional modifications; translations from Lydus' other books are mine.

and shows that Justinian singled out Lydus' knowledge of the "language of the Romans" (*De mag*. 3.29.1: τὴν Ῥωμαίων φωνήν), among his other intellectual achievements, in the letter regarding Lydus' retirement from service to the state. After retiring, Lydus occupied an official position of a teacher of Latin in the university of Constantinople, which also presents him as well qualified (*De mag*. 3.29). Some have, therefore, held his knowledge of Latin to be excellent if not perfect.[2] On the other hand, and this is what has actually puzzled scholars, Lydus offers numerous erroneous explanations for the meaning of Latin words. He traces *kalendae* to καλεῖν, Quirinus to κύριος, and *tiro* to τείρω. Elsewhere, he explains *nenia* as the name of a Roman funeral dirge by connecting it to the Greek name *nete* for the last chord on a cithara.[3] *Nenia* certainly had nothing to do with the last of the three chords. Cicero clarified that the Romans used the word *nenia* for a mourning song, which followed the laudatory funerary speech, and which was accompanied by a flute, not a cythara, and went on to say that the Greeks also used that word for the same purpose.[4]

Lydus' exemplary linguistic escapade is his reference to oblong shields (θυρεοί) as typical for barbarians, who even used doors (θύραι) to protect themselves in the heat of the battle.[5] At least in this case, we can trace the roots of his blunder. It goes back to Polybius' description of the Roman siege of Ambracia in the summer of 189 B.C. After the Ambracians discovered the tunnel that was being dug by the Romans, according to Polybius, fighting erupted in the tunnel, with "both sides using oblong shields and wattles to protect themselves."[6] Livy's rendition of the same episode, and of Polybius' text that served as his source here, presented the fighters as blocking the tunnel "whenever they wished,

2 M. Maas, John Lydus and the Roman Past. London / New York 1992, 32 – 33; Av. Cameron, Old and New Rome: Roman studies in sixth-century Constantinople, in Ph. Rousseau / M. Papoutsakis (eds.), Transformations of Late Antiquity. Essays for Peter Brown. Farnham / Burlington 2009, 15 – 37: 20 – 21. Cf. what looks like a compromise position in Ch. Kelly, Ruling the later Roman empire. Cambridge, MA / London 2004, who spoke of Lydus' narrow administrative specialization, which only required a "formal mastery" of Latin (34), while asserting Lydus' "evident competence" in that language, when speaking of his teaching appointment (92).

3 Lyd. *De mens*. 3.10, *De mag*. 1.5.2 and 1.47.3 – 4, respectively. *De mag*. 1.33.3: λέγεται δὲ παρ' αὐτοῖς τὸ ἐπιτάφιον νηνία, ἐξ Ἑλληνικῆς μᾶλλον ἐτυμολογίας, ὅτι νήτην τὴν ἐσχάτην τῶν ἐν κιθάρᾳ χορδῶν Ἕλληνες καλοῦσιν.

4 Cic. Leg. 2.62: cantus ad tibicinem prosequatur, cui nomen neniae, quo vocabulo etiam <apud> Graeccos cantus lugubres nominantur.

5 Lyd. *De mag*. 1.10.6: Ἑλλήνων γὰρ ἴδιον καὶ μόνων ἀσπίσι τροχωτάταις ἐν πολέμῳ χρῆσθαι, βαρβάρων δὲ θυρεοῖς· πρὸς γὰρ τὸ κατεπεῖγον τῆς μάχης τὰς θύρας ἀνασπῶντες ὡς σκεπάσμασιν αὐταῖς εἰώθασι χρῆσθαι.

6 Polyb. 21.28.11: ἐπεὶ δ'οὐδὲν ἠδύναντο μέγα ποιεῖν διὰ τὸ προβάλλεσθαι θυρεοὺς καὶ γέρρα πρὸ αὐτῶν ἀμφότεροι.

now with curtains stretched across, now with hastily constructed doors." As many have already noted, Livy interpreted the Greek θυρεοί ("oblong shields") of Polybius as θύραι ("doors").[7] Whether Lydus is relying on Livy's text or an intermediary source, he follows the Roman (mis-)interpretation of a Greek word.[8] Elsewhere, Lydus explains *imperare* as "to give orders," tracing it to Greek ἐπιτάττειν (*De mag*. 1.4.2), and deduces the name of the god Mars/Ares either from Latin *mors*, "death," or from Greek ἄρρην or ἄρσην, "male," because, as he notes, only males venerated that deity (*De mens*. 4.34).

Lydus' interpretations of the meaning of many Latin words are plainly erroneous.[9] Such linguistic blunders have fueled the doubts about whether he knew Latin well.[10] Although it may seem like a specific question, Lydus' knowledge of Latin pertains directly to such larger issues as interactions between the

7 Liv. 38.7.10: *segnior deinde ea facta est intersaepientibus cuniculum, ubi uellent, nunc ciliciis praetentis nunc foribus raptim obiectis*. On Polybius as Livy's misinterpreted source: F.W. Walbank, A historical commentary on Polybius 3. Oxford 1979, 127; Titi Livi Ab Urbe condita, libri XXXVI–XL, ed. J. Briscoe. Stuttgart 1991, 518 – 519. On the oblong shields used by the Romans from the time of Romulus, who allegedly borrowed them from the Sabines, see Plut. *Rom*. 21.1 and Polyb. 6.23.2.

8 Cf.. Feissel, Traduire Lydos. Notes en marge de la nouvelle édition de Jean le Lydien, *Des magistratures de l'état romain. Antiquité tardive* 17 (2009) 339 – 357: 341 – 342, who concluded that here Lydus "made allusion" to the siege of Rome by the Goths in 537, as narrated by Procopius, *Bell. Goth*. 1.22.20, and, accordingly, used this interpretation for dating the final version of Lydus' text. However, here Lydus demonstrated his knowledge of Latin, and of sources in Latin, rather than his knowledge of Procopius.

9 E.g., E. Stein, Histoire du Bas-Empire 2. Paris 1949, 732: "loin d'être aussi expert en philologie latine qu'il ne le pense, et ignorant l'acception de certains mots, il donne parfois des étymologies saugrenues"; F. Dölger, Byzantine literature, in J.M. Hussey (ed.), The Cambridge Medieval History 4/2. [2]Cambridge 1967, 207 – 263: 228: "as he had an imperfect acquaintance with Latin, his work contained many serious errors"; G. Dagron, Aux origines de la civilization byzantine: langue de culture et langue d'État. *Revue historique* 241 (1969) 241 – 242: 23 – 56 (repr. in G. Dagron, La romanité chrétienne en Orient. Héritages et mutations. London 1984, I), 41: "Lydos est un latiniste partial"; Dubuisson / Schamp (as footnote 1 above), 1.1: cccxxi: "ces étymologies fantaisistes."

10 E.g., M. Dubuisson, Jean le Lydien et les formes de pouvoir personnel à Rome. *Cahiers Gustave Glotz* 2 (1991) 55 – 72: 56 note 8; M. Dubuisson, Jean le Lydien et le latin: les limites d'une compétence, in: *Serta Leodensia secunda*. Liège 1992, 123 – 131: 123 – 131; T.G. Kolias, Ioannes Lydos und die Diskuswerfer, in C.N. Constantinides et al. (eds.), Φιλέλλην. Studies in honour of Robert Browning. Venice 1996, 175 – 178: 175 – 176. In general: B. Rochette, Le latin dans le monde grec: recherches sur la diffusion de la langue et des letters latines dans les provinces hellénophones de l'Empire romain. Brussels 1997, 253 – 254 (with notes 166 – 167), 274 note 67 (with a summary of opinions), and the previous note. M.S. Bjornlie, Politics and Tradition between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople: A Study of Cassiodorus and the *Variae, 527 – 554*. Cambridge 2013, 113 – 117 did not have to address this question.

Greek and Latin cultures in late antiquity and the cultural background of Byzantine political identity. This article first examines the theory of Latin as a "dialect of Greek," which began in the late Republican period, and concludes with the vision of Latin as the "ancestral language" by Lydus and his fellow-Byzantines of the sixth century.

1. Latin as a dialect of Greek

Deducing Latin concepts from Greek words, Lydus believed that Romulus and his associates knew the Greek language:

> For neither Romulus nor his associates are shown at that point in time to have been ignorant of the Greek language, I mean the Aeolic, as both Cato in his work *On Roman Antiquities* and the most erudite Varro in his introduction to *Pompey* state, because Evander and the other Arcadians, when they had gone to Italy in olden times, had disseminated the Aeolic speech among the barbarians.

and referred to the authority of Varro as the one who

> precisely defined what sort of word is Aeolic and what sort is Gallic; and that a word deriving from the Tuscans is of one sort, while that deriving from the Etruscans is of another, from the blending of which was formed the now prevailing language of the Romans.

While Lydus appears to be the only known author to directly say that Romulus knew Greek, or Aeolic,[11] he shared a popular view of Latin as having been derived from Greek, which was shared by Roman authors and Greek intellectuals alike.[12] No solid evidence exists, however, to concur with Lydus on holding Varro as a supporter of the theory of the Aeolic origins of Latin. Varro certainly accepted the influence of Greek on Latin (e.g., *LL* 5.21; see footnote 35 below). But the only two known texts that present Varro as speaking of the Aeolic origins

---

11 Lyd. *De mag*. 1.5.3 = Varro, fr. 295 (τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνήν, τὴν Αἰολίδα λέγω) and *De mag*. 2.13.16 = Varro, fr. 296. For the identification of Aeolic with Greek, see also Lyd. *De mag*. 1.11.5 (ἐξ Ἑλληνικῆς, Αἰολικῆς ⟨λέγω⟩). Cf. R. Maltby, Varro's attitude to Latin derivations from Greek. *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 7 (1993) 47 – 60: 49: "Aeolic" meant the Greek language that was not Attic, Ionic, or Doric.

12 Cato, *Orig*. 1.1, fr. 19 (Chassignet, with comm. *ad loc*.), and B. Rochette, Jean le Lydien, Caton, Varron et Servius (Jean le Lydien, De magistratibus, I, 5). *BZ* 91 (1998) 471 – 474. Lydus did not have the work about Pompey in the three books by Varro, which was probably published after Pompey's death in 48 B.C., in mind but his Εἰσαγωγικός *ad Pompeium*, dated to 71 B.C.: Gell. 14.7.2; Rochette, as before, 472 note 8.

of Latin are Lydus' above-quoted words in *De mag*. 1.5.3–4 and 2.13.6. Georg Goetz and Fritz Schöll, as well as Francesco Semi, put these two references together with a passage from Priscian's *Institutes of Grammar* as the only identifiable excerpts from Varro's *De Origine Linguae Latinae*. But Priscian made no mention of Varro's view on Aeolic origins of Latin in that text, while Gino Funaioli's reconstruction of *De Origine Linguae Latinae* omitted Priscian's words altogether, and only included Lydus' same two passages.[13] Despite Lydus' assertion to the contrary, Varro's *De Lingua Latina* only said that Evander was an Arcadian who came to the Palatine "from Greece," and made no mention of Aeolic speech in that place.[14] If Varro shared the "tradition of Rome's earliest historians that the Arcadian Evander had come to the site of Rome two generations before the Trojan war,"[15] then the view of Evander as bringing the Greek alphabet to Latium could have developed as a separate theory at a later date. The same can be suggested for the theory of the Aeolic origins of Latin. Lydus' statement that Varro shared that theory not only displays Lydus' habit of relying on later renditions instead of the actual works he claimed to have used,[16] but also, evidently, reflects the later fusion of originally separate traditions.

These traditions were already closely interwoven in works by the authors of the Augustan period, who held Evander as the bringer or inventor of the Latin alphabet.[17] Varro's contemporary, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, credited the Arcadians (of Evander), who settled in the territory of the future Rome, with being the first to introduce the use of Greek letters in Italy, and said that the "language spoken by the Romans is neither utterly barbarian nor absolutely Greek, but a mixture, as it were, of both, the greater part of which is Aeolic." Asserting that Latin was a dialect of Greek reinforced the "thesis that Roman and Greek

---

13 Varro, fr. 295–296 (see note 11 above), in G. Goetz / F. Schöll (ed.), M. Terenti Varronis De lingua quae supersunt. Leipzig 1910, 200–201; F. Semi (ed.), M. Terentius Varro, vol. 2. Venice 1965, 11. Prisc. *Inst. Gramm.* 1.39, in: Prisciani Institutionum Grammaticarum libri I–XII, ed M. Hertz. *Grammatici Latini*, 2. Leipzig 1855, 30. Varro, fr. 295–296, in G. Funaioli (ed.), Grammaticae Romanae Fragmenta. Leipzig 1907, 311–312.

14 Varro, *LL* 5.21 (Evander enim, qui uenit in Palatium, e Graecia Arcas), with J. Collart, Varron, grammarien latin. Paris 1954, 215.

15 This view: E. Fantham, The role of Evander in Ovid's *Fasti*. *Arethusa* 25 (1992) 155–171: 156–157.

16 This habit: Dubuisson / Schamp 2006 (as footnote 1 above), 1.1: cxxviii–cxxix. The debate on whether Lydus used Varro's text or a later rendition: A. Gitner, Varro *Aeolicus:* Latin's affiliation with Greek, in D. Butterfield (ed.), Varro Varius: the Polymath of the Roman World. Cambridge 2015, 33–50: 43 note 28.

17 Liv. 1.7.8; Tac. *Ann.* 11.14.3–4 (on the form of Latin letters being similar to that of the most ancient Greek letters); Hygin. *Fab.* 277.

culture are essentially the same since the Romans themselves were, in ethnic origin, Greek."[18] Dionysius illustrated the latter idea with reference to what he, and some other authors, termed as the gradual "barbarization" of the Greeks who established colonies in foreign lands, as follows:

> If, therefore, they were a barbarian race (εἰ δὴ βάρβαρον αὐτῶν τὸ γένος ἦν), they would have been so far from forgetting their ancestral rites and the established customs of their country, by which they had attained to so great prosperity, that they would even have made it the interest of all their subjects as well to honor the gods according to the customary Roman ceremonies; and nothing could have hindered the whole Greek world, which is now subject to the Romans for already the seventh generation, from being barbarized if the Romans had indeed been barbarians (εἴπερ ἦσαν βάρβαροι).[19]

If the Romans were not originally barbarians, they were the bearers of Greek culture, whose language was Greek (although Dionysius does not state this here) that got mixed up with local languages, thus turning Latin into a dialect of Greek. This fitted with Dionysius' reference to Faustulus as descending from the Arcadians who arrived with Evander, and to Romulus and Remus as receiving instruction in Greek learning (1.84.3 – 5), and allowed Dionysius to qualify the newly founded Rome as a Greek city, which did not become "entirely barbarized" with the passage of time and the influx of numerous and diverse new settlers (1.89.1– 3). Acknowledging the Greek origins of Latin made it possible to present Evander as the other *ktistes* of Rome, together with Romulus, in works from the late Republican and imperial periods.[20] Once established, this vision of Evander survived into the sixth century, when Lydus spoke of Evander as bringing the Aeolic speech (*De mag.* 1.5.3; see footnote 11 above), or the so-called Cadmian letters (*De mens.* 1.8), from Greece to Italy.

---

18 D.H. 1.33.4 – 5, with A. Delcourt, Évandre à Rome. Réflexions autour de quatre interpretations de la légende. *Latomus* 60 (2001) 829 – 863: 853, 858; and D.H. 1.90.1: Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ φωνὴν μὲν οὔτ' ἄκρως βάρβαρον οὔτ' ἀπηρτισμένως Ἑλλάδα φθέγγονται, μικτὴν δέ τινα ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, ἧς ἐστιν ἡ πλείων Αἰολίς. The quotation: M. Fox / N. Livingstone, Rhetoric and historiography, in I. Worthington (ed.), A Companion to Greek Rhetoric. Malden 2007, 542 – 561: 555 – 556.

19 D.H. 7.70.5 (tr. by E. Spelman, modified). For a discussion of this concept and its treatment by Dionysius and other ancient authors, see esp. G.W. Bowersock, Les Grecs 'barbarisés.' *Ktèma* 17 (1992) 249 – 257, and also I. Peirano, Hellenized Romans and barbarized Greeks. Reading the end of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*. *JRS* 100 (2010) 32 – 53, whose discussion would have profited from examining the view of Dionysius, and his contemporaries, on the relationship between the Greek and Latin languages.

20 On this vision of Evander in Roman texts, see Fantham, Role (as footnote 15 above) 157 – 159.

The lifetime of Varro and Dionysius was when we first hear of "any serious speculation concerning the relationship of the Latin language to Greek,"[21] and when the theory of the Aeolic origins of Latin emerged. The authorship of that theory has been ascribed to either Hypsicrates of Amisus or Philoxenus of Alexandria, both from the first century B.C.[22] The former is the earliest known author to write on Greek origins of Latin words, establishing etymological links between the two languages.[23] Philoxenus, too, offered Greek etymologies of Latin words, including the one mentioned by Lydus: "'grandson' is rendered *nepos*, 'young boy' by Greek etymology, and Philoxenus stated it well."[24] Philoxenus is also credited with having authored the theory of the Aeolic origins of Latin: his works about Greek dialects dealt with not only Syracusan, Laconian, and Ionian, but also Latin, while he referred to the Romans as "Aeolic colonists."[25] Their contemporary, either the elder or the younger (according to the *Suda*) Tyrannion,

---

21 Maltby, Varro's attitude (as footnote 11 above) 47, who tentatively saw this development as a "result of a new influx of Greek grammarians captured in the wars with Mithridates."

22 Hypsicrates: E. Gabba, Il latino come dialetto greco, in: Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di Augusto Rostagni. Turin 1963, 188 – 194: 189, and next note. Philoxenus, fr. 1 – 12, in Funaioli, Fragmenta (as footnote 13 above), 443 – 446 = fr. 311 – 329, in Ch. Theodoridis (ed.), Die Fragmente des Grammatikers Philoxenos. Berlin / New York 1976, 234 – 242. K. Schöpsdau, Vergleiche zwischen Lateinisch und Griechisch in der antiken Sprachwissenschaft, in C.W. Müller / K. Sier (eds.), Zum Umgang mit fremden Sprachen in der griechisch-römischen Antike: Kolloquium der Fachrichtungen klassische Philologie der Universitäten Leipzig und Saarbrücken am 21. und 22. November 1989 in Saarbrücken. Stuttgart 1992, 115 – 136: 117 – 118 pointed out that this theory had first been attested in Philoxenus' writings, while presenting it as a product of the Alexandrian "Dialektforschung."

23 Gell. 16.12.6: *idque dixisse ait Hypsicraten quempiam grammaticum, cuius libri sane nobiles sunt super his quae a Graecis accepta sunt*. M. Dubuisson, Le latin est-il une langue barbare? *Ktèma* 9 (1984) 55 – 68: 60: "le premier, dans les texts conservés, à expliquer le vocabulaire latin par le grec."

24 Lyd. *De mag*. 1.42.3: νέπως, ὁ νέος παῖς ἐξ Ἑλληνικῆς ἐτυμολογίας, ὁ ἔγγονος λέγεται, ὡς καλῶς ὁ Φιλόξενος εἶπεν = Philox. fr. 12 (Fun.) = fr. 328 (Theod.), with T. Cupaiuolo, La teoria della derivazione della lingua latina dall'eolico. Palermo 1925, 43; R. Giomini, Il grammatico Filosseno e la derivazione del latino dall'aeolico. *La parola del passato* 8 (1953) 365 – 376: 374 – 375 and J.L. Heller, Nepos σκορπιστής and Philoxenus. *Transactions and proceedings of the American Philological Association* 93 (1962) 61 – 89.

25 The *Suda*, Φ 394: Περὶ τῆς Λακώνων διαλέκτου, Περὶ τῆς Ἰάδος διαλέκτου, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν. M. Schmidt, De Philoxeno Alexandrino. *Philologus* 4 (1849) 627 – 640: 628 – 632; Giomini, Grammatico (as footnote 24 above), 365 – 376; Dubuisson, Latin (as footnote 23 above), 60; J. Schamp, in Dubuisson / Schamp (as footnote 1 above), 1.1: clxxviii–clxxix; B. Stevens, Aeolism: Latin as a dialect of Greek. *The Classical Journal* 102 (2006/07) 115 – 144: 124. The "dialect of the Romans": Philox. fr. 1 – 12 (Fun.) = fr. 311 – 329 (Theod.). Aeolic colonists: Philox. fr. 323: οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι ἄποικοι ὄντες τῶν Αἰολέων (Theod.).

authored a work *On the Roman Dialect* that asserted that Latin did not emerge as a local language but was derived from Greek.[26]

Regardless of who authored the theory of the Aeolic origins of Latin,[27] it evidently emerged in the first century B.C. as an outgrowth of a more general view that held Latin as some form of a derivation from Greek.[28] The latter view could have been the opinion of some of the Romans as early as Cato's time.[29] Another approach has been to see the first century B.C. as the apex of interest in Aeolism in Rome.[30] This "politically attractive" (in the words of Robert Maltby) theory had an obvious appeal in late Republican Rome, flattering the Romans' desire for cultural respectability, while also consoling the Greeks with the idea that they had been subdued not by barbarians but by people with the same language.[31] The philological explanation was one of many adjustments necessitated by the cooperation between the Roman central authority and local Greek-speaking elites.[32]

26 Tyrann. fr. 63 (περὶ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς διαλέκτου ὅτι ἔστιν ἐκ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς κοὐκ αὐθιγενὴς ἡ Ῥωμαϊκὴ διάλεκτος), in W. Haas (ed.), Die Fragmente der Grammatiker Tyrannion und Diokles. Berlin and New York 1977, 176; the *Suda*, T 1184 and 1185. See Cupaiuolo, Teoria (as footnote 24 above), 28–29; Maltby, Varro's attitude (as footnote 11 above), 48–49; Rochette, Latin (as footnote 10 above), 259; Stevens, Aeolism (as footnote 25 above), 125, and 127 (on this theory in Quintilian). On this and similar works by Greek authors from the first century B.C.–first century A.D., see Dubuisson, Latin (as footnote 23 above), 60–61; Gitner, Varro (as footnote 16 above), 37 (with note 15).

27 See also Dubuisson, Latin (as footnote 23 above), 66: Philoxenus or Varro; E. S. Gruen, Culture and national identity in republican Rome. Ithaca 1992, 235: Hypsicrates and Philoxenus.

28 On diverse understandings of the idea of Aeolism by ancient authors, see Stevens, Aeolism (as footnote 25 above), 126 and Gitner, Varro (as footnote 16 above), 35–36, who also spoke (41, 45) of "radical Aeolism." On the "nativist reaction" to the theory of the Greek roots of Latin, see also below.

29 B. Rochette, Greek and Latin bilingualism, in E. J. Bakker (ed.), A Companion to the Ancient Greek language. Malden 2010, 281–295: 285, on this thesis as having come "to be formulated at Rome from the time of Sulla to the reign of Claudius." Cf. Cato, *Orig.* 1.1, fr. 19 (see footnote 12 above); for this view as a *communis opinio* in the time of Cato, see Gruen, Culture (as footnote 27 above), 235.

30 Dubuisson, Latin (as footnote 23 above), 62; S Stevens, Aeolism (as footnote 25 above), 121, 123, 126.

31 Dubuisson, Latin (as footnote 23 above), 63–65; Maltby, Varro's attitude (as footnote 11 above), 48–49; Delcourt, Évandre (as footnote 18 above), 852 (with note 137).

32 Cf. Bowersock, Grecs (as footnote 19 above), 252: "à l'époque d'Auguste … la symbiose des cultures grecque et romaine avait déjà atteint un stade avancé de maturité" with specific examples from Italy, who approached essentially the same matter from a different perspective.

2. Latin as the "ancestral language"

In addition to doubting Lydus' knowledge of Latin, attempts have been made to explain his linguistic interpretations in other ways. Ernst Stein pointed out to Lydus' "senile clumsiness and negligence," and Duncan Cloud distinguished the knowledge of a language from the "ability to copy accurately a list of good glosses without recognizing why they are good."[33] While there might be some truth behind each of these observations, none of them explains how Lydus could perform his administrative and professorial duties if his knowledge of Latin was impaired. Probably more importantly, all of the evidence that serves as the only basis for such conclusions is limited to Lydus' etymological interpretations. In some cases, Lydus bases his etymology on phonetic assonance. In Greek, he explains the word δράκων, "a snake," by δέρκομαι, "to see clearly," and the word φιλοτιμία, "love for honor," "ambition," as αἱ τῶν φίλων τιμαί, "honors from friends." In Latin, he deduces the name of the dress *toga* from *tegere*, "to cover," by the interchange of a vowel, and the word *servi*, "slaves," from *servere*, "to preserve," as defining war captives who were preserved by their captors.[34] Lydus thus applies the same approach to each of the two languages, and explains Greek and Latin words with reference to certain other Greek and Latin words, respectively. While some of his etymological observations deduce Latin concepts from Greek words, Lydus never goes in the opposite direction: when the two languages are being put together, Greek is always the source of Latin words, and not the other way around. This, too, presents Latin as a derivation from Greek.

The knowledge of a language certainly determines the quality of translations made from or into that language. But this is not the same as etymology, which is defined in Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "the history of a linguistic form (as a word) shown by tracing its development since its earliest recorded occurrence in the language where it is found, by tracing its transmission from one language to another, by analyzing it into its component parts, by identifying its cognates in other languages, or by tracing it and its cognates to a common ancestral form in an ancestral language." Etymology, therefore, focuses on establishing (the history of) a relationship between languages, tracing them to the ancestral lan-

---

33 Stein, Histoire (as footnote 9 above), 734: "une maladresse et une négligence séniles"; D. Cloud, A pattern of error in Ioannes Lydus: the parricide question, in M. Humbert (éd.), Mélanges de droit romain et d'histoire ancienne. Hommage à la mémoire de A. Magdelain. Paris 1998, 91–108: 92 note 5.

34 Lyd. *De mens.* 4.6 and *De mag.* 1.20.3, and Lyd. *De mag.* 1.7.3, and 1.11.4, respectively.

guage. Making a sound etymological observation implies a good knowledge of both languages, but the former is not reduced to the latter: establishing a real or claimed connection between two languages can pursue more than one purpose. In the first century B.C., etymology served as the basis for the theory of Latin as a dialect of Greek. In addition to deducing Latin *nepos* from Greek νέος παῖς, as seen above, Philoxenus produced similar explanations of many Latin words with reference to Greek concepts, like κορώνα and *corona*, and στυγνός and *stygius*, among others. Varro, whose attitude to this theory was more ambiguous, as we shall see below, still deduced some Latin words from Greek, like the Latin *terminus* from the Greek τέρμων. [35]

In the sixth century, Lydus' etymological constructs reflected a dichotomy between the Byzantines' claim to Roman political heritage and their declining use of the Latin language. In political terms, the Byzantine Empire, with its capital in Constantinople (or "our Rome": *De mag.* 1.20.7, 2.30.5), was an extension and continuation of the old Roman Empire (with the city of Rome as the "first" capital and the "mother of our state": 2.20.1, 3.1.2), in the sixth century and long afterwards. Cassiodorus (88.34) and Gregory of Tours (16.12, 28.1) still saw the Roman empire as one entity, *imperium Romanum*. The popes, including Gregory the Great, Honorius, and Sergius, dated documents by the regnal years of emperors in Constantinople. Bede did this as well, speaking of them as rulers of the "Roman empire," simultaneously placing them in the direct line of succession from Augustus, and synchronizing his universal chronicle with their regnal years, in the early eighth century.[36] With languages, and cultural identity in general, it was different. Lydus often contrasts "Roman speech" – another way of expressing "as the Romans say"[37] – and "their native language" with "our" or "Hellenic speech," while also mentioning "Hellenic etymology."[38] In the west, Gregory of Tours conversely labeled the Byzantines as "Greeks," spoke of Latin as "our language," and set aside the customs of the "Greeks."[39] Boethius

---

35 Philox. fr. 4 and 9 (Fun.) = fr. 315 and 321 (Theod.), with Giomini, Grammatico (as footnote 24 above), 373 – 374 and 374 – 375, respectively. See also Schmidt, De Philoxeno (as footnote 25 above), 632. Varro, *LL* 5.21.

36 Bede, *HE* 1.22, 1.34, 2.18, 3.4, 5.7. The direct line of succession: e.g., 1.13, 1.23. Synchronization: e.g., 5.7.

37 Lyd. *De mens.* 1.12, 4.30, 4.47, 4.169; *De mag.* 3.29.1.

38 Lyd. *De mens.* 1.30, 3.10, 4.30, 4.33 – 34, 4.102, 4.112; *De mag.* 1.9 – 10, 1.32, 1.42, 1.46, 1.50, 2.3, 2.12, 2.13, 2.30, 3.2, 3.7 – 8. *De mag.* 1.42.3: ἐξ Ἑλληνικῆς ἐτυμολογίας.

39 Greg. *Hist.* 5.44 (*litteris nostris*), 5.44 (*sicut Graeci habent*) and 6.40 and 6.43.

planned to have all the works of Plato and Aristotle translated from Greek into Latin, to make them accessible to the "Romans."[40]

This dichotomy fully revealed itself in the ninth century when, in the wake of Charlemagne's crowning as Roman emperor, western leaders challenged the status of the Byzantines as political successors to the Roman empire on the basis of their use of the Greek language and, accordingly, their ignorance of Latin. Pope Nicholas I questioned the validity of the official title of Byzantine rulers as "emperors of the Romans," because they were ignorant of the language of ancient Romans in the first place, while Louis II ("the Younger," the son of Lothair I), the king of Italy, addressed Basil I as *imperator novae Romae*, because Basil's subjects were "Greeks." On the Byzantine side, Michael III referred to the Latin language as "barbarian" and "Scythian."[41] Political claims by western leaders can be seen as reflecting the stance of the grammarians who opposed the view of Latin as being totally derived from Greek. This desire might explain Varro's eagerness to see Latin as a mix of different languages, i. e. not simply as a derivation from Greek, thus offering a "nativist reaction" to "radical Aeolism." Quintilian noted that Latin was made for the most part – that is, not wholly – from Greek, while evidently categorizing a typical "ancient grammarian" (*grammaticus vetus*) as one who praised the patriotism of those who aimed at strengthening the Latin language and asserted that the Romans had no need of foreign practices (*nec alienis egere institutis fatebantur*).[42] This was the cultural and ideo-

40 Cassiod. Ep. 45: ut Graecorum dogmata doctrinam feceris esse Romanam (A.D. 507).

41 Nicholas I, in E. Dümmler / E. Perels (ed.), Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV. *MGH Epp.*, 6. Berlin 1925, 454 – 487, no. 88 (A.D. 865), incl. 459.20 – 21: *quia ridiculum est vos appellare Romanorum imperatores et tamen linguam non nosse Romanam.* Louis II, in G. Laehr / E. L. E. Caspar (ed.) Epistolae Karolini Aevi V. *MGH Epp.*, 7. Berlin 1928, 386 – 394 (incl. 391.5 – 6: *nam nichil lingua Latina resonat, quam quod Graeca dicitur* βασιλευς) = Chronicon Salernitanum, ed. U. Westerbergh. Stockholm 1956, 107 – 121. See E. Gibbon, The decline and fall of the Roman empire5. New York 1911, 524 (with note 101). Michael III: F. Dölger (ed.), Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565 – 1453. I. Teil: Regesten von 565 – 1025. Munich / Berlin 1924, 56 – 57, no. 464 ("ca. 865") = A. E. Müller (ed.), Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des Oströmischen Reiches von 565 – 1453, I.1: Regesten 565 – 867. ^{2}Munich 2009, 240 – 242, no. 464 ("spring/summer 865"). For a detailed discussion, see S. Dmitriev, The cultural context of Byzantium's political and religious controversy with the West in the ninth century. *Porphyra* 24 (2015) 4 – 27.

42 Lyd. *De mag.* 2.13.16 = Varro, fr. 296 (see footnote 11 above), with Cupaiuolo, Teoria (as footnote 24 above), 30 – 35 (on Varro's "nationalistic stance"), with A. Garcea / V. Lomanto, Gellius and Fronto on loanwords and literary models, in L. Holford-Stevens / A. Vardi (eds.), The worlds of Aulus Gellius. Oxford / New York 2004, 41 – 64: 45, and Gitner, Varro (as footnote 16 above), incl. 34 and 41 on these expressions. Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.58: *maxima ex parte Romanus* (sc. *sermo*) *inde* (sc. *ex sermone Greco*) *conversus est*, and 59.

logical context in which the concept of *latinitas* emerged at the end of the Roman republic.[43] It has already been suggested that when the grammarian Fl. Sosipater Charisius (*fl.* 4th cent. A.D.) mentioned the view of Latin idioms being distinct and independent from Greek ones, he was following the grammarian Remmius Palaemon, who lived in the first century A.D.[44] According to Priscian (*fl.* c. A.D. 500), the grammarian Didymus demonstrated that everything the Greeks had in their grammar the Latins likewise had.[45] Whether Priscian's "Didymus" should be identified with Didymus Chalcenterus from the Augustan period or with Claudius Didymus, a grammarian and lexicographer from the first century A.D., makes no difference to the present discussion.[46] In later times, such views were shared by Charisius, as seen above, and, evidently, Macrobius, whose work *On the Differences and Similarities of the Greek and Latin Word* has survived in fragments. The culmination of this approach took the form of a theory about the tripartite division of all languages into Greek, Latin, and barbarian, which put Latin in a class of its own.[47] The stance of Michael III, too, can be linked with the view of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Hypsicrates, Philoxenus, and other grammarians who saw Latin as a dialect of Greek, and, even if not entirely a barbarian language, not the same as the Greek language either.

---

43 See Cupaiuolo, Teoria (as footnote 24 above), 46–47 and esp. F. Desbordes, *Latinitas:* constitution et évolution d'un modèle de l'identité linguistique, in S. Said (ed.), *Hellenismos*. Quelques jalons pour une histoire de l'identité grecque. Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 25–27 octobre 1989. Leiden / New York 1991, 33–47, who pointed to the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (c. mid-80s B.C.?) as the earliest instance of the use of this concept, and (33) saw it as a response to the concept of *hellenismos* in "la pensée latine sur le latin."

44 Charis. 5.291: Idiomata quae sunt nostri sermonis innumerabilia quidem debent esse, ea enim sunt omnia quae pro nostro more efferimus et non secundum Graecos, in Flavii Sosipatri Charisii Artis grammaticae libri V, ed. K. Barwick. Leipzig 1925, 379. This interpretation: K. Barwick, Remmius Palaemon und die römische *ars grammatica*. Leipzig 1922, 167; Schöpsdau, Vergleiche (as footnote 22 above), 116.

45 Prisc. *Inst.* 8.96, in Hertz 1855, 445.15–16 = Didymus, fr. 3, in: Didymi Chalcenteri grammatici Alexandrini fragmenta quae supersunt omnia, ed. M. Schmidt. Leipzig 1854, 347 = Funaioli, Fragmenta (as footnote 13 above),, 448: [Didymus] *ostendens omnia, quae habent in arte Graeci, habere etiam Latinos, exemplis hoc approbat*. See also the *Suda* Δ 872.

46 For the latter identification, see, e.g., the *Suda* Δ 874; Dionysii Thracis Ars grammatica, ed. G. Uhlig. Leipzig 1883, 54 (note); Schöpsdau, Vergleiche (as footnote 22 above), 123; and overviews of the corresponding debate in B.K. Braswell, Didymos of Alexandria: Commentary on Pindar. Basel 2013, 90 and Gitner, Varro (as footnote 16 above), 37 note 15.

47 See *Ex libro Macrobii De differentiis et societatibus Graeci Latinique verbi*, in H. Keil (ed.), Artium Scriptores Minores. *Grammatici Latini*, 5. Leipzig 1868, 599–655. The tripartite division: Garcea/Lomanto, Gellius (as footnote 42 above), 46–47.

The outbreak of the conflict between the Byzantines' claim to Roman political heritage and the replacement of Latin by Greek as Byzantium's official language was still in the future.[48] Although this conflict lay dormant in the sixth century, it was far from being unnoticed at that time. Lydus complained of the diminishing use of Latin when he criticized the praetorian prefect Cyrus (the Egyptian), who, because of his ignorance of Latin, introduced the Greek language into official proceedings during the time of Theodosius II, and again, when he disparaged his contemporary, the praetorian prefect John (the Cappadocian), for replacing noble Latin with base Greek in Byzantine official documentation.[49] A decisive shift is thought to have taken place at the turn of the 540s, still during Lydus' lifetime, as the number of Justinian's *Novels* published in Greek increased dramatically after 534, whereas the last of his *Novels* in Latin was issued in 541.[50] Lydus also kept telling the story about an oracle, which, according to Fonteius, allegedly foretold Romulus that Fortune would desert the Romans at the time when they forgot "their ancestral language."[51]

---

48 On this replacement, see Gibbon, Decline (as footnote 41 above) 522 – 525; H. Zilliacus, Zum Kampf der Weltsprachen im oströmischen Reich. Helsingfors 1935, 70 – 80; Dagron, Origines (as footnote 9 above) 37, 40 – 42; Schamp 2009, 263.

49 Lyd. *De mag.* 2.12.2: Κύρου … παραβῆναι θαρρήσαντος τὴν παλαιὰν συνήθειαν καὶ τὰς ψήφους Ἑλλάδι φωνῇ προενεγκόντος, σύν τῇ Ῥωμαίων φωνῇ καὶ τὴν Τύχην ἀπέβαλεν ἡ ἀρχή and 3.68.3: ταῦτα μετέβαλεν ὁ Καππαδόκης εἰς γραώδη τινὰ καὶ χαμαίζηλον ἀπαγγελίαν, with Stein, Histoire (as footnote 9 above), 437 – 439. Cyrus Panopolites: *PLRE* 2: 336 – 339, with Kelly, Ruling (as footnote 2 above), 32 – 33 on the context. John: Stein, ibid., 433 – 449; *PLRE* 3.A: 627 – 635; Kelly, ibid., 56 – 63.

50 The former: Zilliacus, Kampf (as footnote 48 above), 72; B. Adamik, Zur Geschichte des offiziellen Gebrauchs der lateinischen Sprache. Justinians Reform. *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 43 (2003) 229 – 241: 232 – 233, 238 – 239; Corcoran, Roman law and the two languages in Justinian's empire. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London* 60 (2017) 100 (arguing for a "different attitude towards Greek [in Byzantine legal codification] even between 529 – 534"), 112. The latter: T. Honoré, Tribonian. London 1978, 124 – 138, who saw (129 – 132) the year 542 as "crucial" in this regard; followed by Cameron, Old and New Rome (as footnote 2 above), 29. See also Kaiser, Die Zweisprachigkeit reichsweiter Novellen unter Justinian. *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung* 129 (2012) 392 – 474, who distinguished between the Novels in Greek and Latin depending on the addressee (cf. Zilliacus, ibid., 73), and specifically focused on the question of whether the Novels applicable to the entire empire were in Greek; cf. A. Kaldellis, Hellenism in Byzantium. The transformation of Greek identity and the reception of the classical tradition. Cambridge / New York 2007, 67: in Byzantium, "there were many different official settings and no one official language."

51 Lyd. *De mag.* 2.12.1: τότε Ῥωμαίους τὴν Τύχην ἀπολείψειν ὅταν αὐτοὶ τῆς πατρίου φωνῆς ἐπιλάθωνται, with observations by B. Rochette, Justinien et la langue latine. À propos d'un pretendu oracle rendu à Romulus d'après Jean le Lydien. *BZ* 90 (1997) 413 – 415: 414, followed by

However, Lydus himself was a part of this trend: he never referred to any author who wrote in Greek as "Roman." Similar to his contemporaries, he only applied the latter term to authors writing in Latin.[52] The Byzantines' claim to the political heritage of ancient Rome, which had to be based on the use and knowledge of Latin as "the language of the Romans," was still culturally possible if Latin was being counted as a dialect of Greek. The view that Latin had been derived from Greek continued to be shared by such lawyers as Gaius and Ulpian in the second and third centuries, and by such grammarians as Charisius and Priscian, in the fourth and sixth centuries, respectively.[53]

While there can be no doubt that Latin still played an important social and cultural role in sixth-century Constantinople,[54] it is likewise obvious that its political importance was diminishing. Whereas Lydus' words display his personal negative attitude to the decline of the public usage of Latin, not to mention his own income, they also point to the political significance of Latin as the

---

J. Schamp, Pour une étude des milieux latins de Constantinople, in F. Biville / I. Boehm (eds.), Autour de Michel Lejeune. Actes des Journées d'étude organisées à l'Université Lumière Lyon 2 – Maison d'Orient et de la Mediterranée. Lyon 2009, 255 – 272: 262 (with note 29). See also *De mag*. 3.42.1, and *De mens.* 4.169; cf. *De mag*. 2.12.2 (see footnote 49 above). This Fonteius has been identified as C. Fonteius Capito, a pontifex and contemporary of Varro by S. Weinstock, C. Fonteius Capito and the 'Libri Tagetici.' *Papers of the British School at Rome* 18 (1950) 44 – 49; M.H. Crawford, Appendix III, in A. K. Bowman / E. Chaplin / A. Lintott (eds.), The Cambridge Ancient History 10. ²Cambridge / New York 1996, 983 – 985: 983; and J.M. Turfa, Divining the Etruscan World. Cambridge / New York 2012, 288 – 289, who all interpreted Lydus' varied mentions of "Capito" and "Fonteius" as references to the same person. Others have distinguished between Lydus' "Capito" and "Fonteius," and identified the former as the grammarian Sinnius Capito, a younger contemporary of Varro: see Ch. Guittard, Les calendriers brontoscopiques dans le monde étrusco-romain, in C. Cusset (éd.), La météorologie dans l'Antiquité. Saint-Étienne 2003, 455 – 466: 461, note 56 (see Gell. 5.20.2), and the latter as the jurist C. Ateius Capito from the late Republican–Augustan period: for the criticism of this view, see F. Graf, Fonteius [I 9]. *Der Neue Pauly* 4 (1998) 588.

52 S. Dmitriev, John Lydus and his contemporaries on identities and cultures of sixth-century Byzantium. *DOP* 64 (2010 [2012]) 27 – 42: 32 – 35, and 35 – 41 on Lydus' use of "Roman" to define the Byzantines' political identity.

53 Gai. Inst. 3.93; Ulp., Dig. 45.1.1.6. Charis. 5.292: *cum ab omni sermone Graeco Latina lingua pendere videatur*, in Barwick 1925, 380.21. Prisc. *De metr. Fabul. Ter.*, in: Prisciani Institutionum Grammaticarum libri XIII–XVIII, ed. M. Hertz. *Grammatici Latini*, 3. Leipzig 1859, 418.20 – 21: *solent autem Latini in multis initium aliquid accipientes a Graecis ab angusto in effusum licentiae spatium hoc dilatare.*

54 See esp. Cameron, Old and New Rome (as footnote 2 above), 15 – 36, who even advocated (17 – 18) a certain revival of Latin, in comparison with the fifth century, and S. Corcoran, Roman law (as footnote 50 above) 96 – 116: 114. On the knowledge and the official use of Latin in fifth-century Byzantium, see F.G.B. Millar, A Greek Roman empire: power and belief under Theodosius II (408 – 450). Berkeley 2006, 88 – 92.

most characteristic display of Romanitas. It is for this reason that Lydus qualified contemporary Latin-speakers in the west not as Romans but "Italians," and labeled their Latin as the "language of the Italians,"[55] thus reserving Romanitas for only the Byzantines. Likewise, Justinian's *Novellae* still marked Latin as the "ancestral language" of the Byzantines, confirming continuity between ancient Rome and the Byzantine Empire. Lydus' use of the phrase "ancestral language" and similar expressions for Latin shows that this was a well-established vocabulary.[56] His etymological observations served the same purpose. Deducing Latin terms from Greek words was a natural thing to do if Latin was a dialect of Greek, which was also a way to prove that the two civilizations were inherently linked to each other. From this perspective, Lydus' contemporaries did not necessarily see his etymologies as "saugrenues" and "fantaisistes" (see footnote 9 above), just like they evidently accepted his references to the Roman state as "our state" when speaking about the organization of Rome by Romulus and later rulers, or as "our side" when describing Roman military and diplomatic history, tracing the origin of the Byzantine army to that of the Romans.[57]

Conclusion

It is possible that some of Lydus' references reflected the "language policy of Justinian, who encouraged the spread of Latin in the Greek East."[58] Like the emperor and all other Byzantines, Lydus held Latin as the "ancestral language" of By-

---

55 "The Italians": Lyd. *De mens.* 1.13, 1.32, 4.157, 4.174, *De ost*. 16, *De mag*. 1.30.1, 1.47.4, 1.50.1, 2.4.2, 2.7.5, 2.20.2, 2.27.2, 3.49.2, 3.73.2. The "Italian letters": *De mag*. 2.16.4. Italian speech: *De mag*. 3.7.2, 3.11.2 and 3.68.1 (τοῖς Ἰταλῶν ῥήμασι), 3.20.8 (Ἰταλίδι), 3.68.2 (τῇ τῶν Ἰταλῶν φωνῇ), 3.73.2 (τῆς Ἰταλίδος φωνῆς). Cf. Millar, Empire (as footnote 54 above), 91 on Latin as an "important feature of the 'Roman' superstructure of the 'Greek Roman Empire,'" and Kaldellis, Hellenism (as footnote 50 above), 69 on Byzantine law as "basically Roman law by another name."

56 Iust. *Nov.* 7.1 and 15.pr.: *paterna voce*; 13.pr: *patriae nostrae vox*; 30.5: *patria voce*; 22.2: *secundum antiquam et patriam linguam*. Lyd. *De mag*. 1.20.3, 1.42.3, 1.46.1, 2.13–14, and 3.32.5: πατρίως, 1.50.9: τῇ πατρίῳ Ῥωμαίων φωνῇ, 2.3.9: τῇ πατρίῳ φωνῇ, 2.12.2: πατρίοις ῥήμασιν, τῆς πατρίου φωνῆς, and τῇ Ῥωμαίων φωνῇ as opposed to Ἑλλάδι φωνῇ, with B. Rochette, Dans la langue de nos pères, Byzantion 68 (1998) 231–234.

57 Lyd. *De mag*. 1.2–3, 1.12, 2.23, 3.52. For such references in Lydus, see also above.

58 Rochette, Langue (as footnote 56 above) 231–234: 233. The quotation: Gitner, Varro (as footnote 16 above), 43. *Pace* Schamp, Pour une étude (as footnote 51 above), 268–269.

zantium. However, his use of etymology, which traced Latin concepts to Greek words, shifted the emphasis to presenting Latin as a dialect of Greek. This theory, which originated in the first century B.C., when the “Greek language slowly lost its leading position in the West in favour of Latin” and when the earliest documented references to Latin as the “ancestral language” of the Romans emerged,[59] received new life in the sixth century, partly also for political reasons, even if they were of a different nature. Presenting Latin as a dialect of Greek offered a way to solve the problem of the growing dichotomy between the Byzantines’ Roman political and Greek cultural affiliations, when Latin was going out of use as the official language of Byzantium. As a response to a political challenge, Lydus’ etymological observations were irrelevant to his level of knowledge of Latin, which must have been quite high.

---

59 B. Hintzen, Latin, Attic, and other Greek dialects: criteria of ἑλληνισμός in grammatical treatises of the first century BCE, in T. A. Schmitz / N. Wiater (eds.), The struggle for identity. Greeks and their past in the first century BCE. Stuttgart 2011, 125 – 141: 125 – 126. Lucr. 1.832, 3.260.

DE GRUYTER DOI 10.1515/bz-2018-0004 — BZ 2018; 111(1): 71–102

Vicky Foskolou

Decoding Byzantine ekphraseis on works of art. Constantine Manasses's description of earth and its audience

With fig. 1–14 on plates I–VII

Abstract: The study deals with ekphraseis on works of art and poses the question as to how far these texts can be a reliable source for the study or even the reconstruction of the artefacts they describe. Based on reception theory and reader-response criticism, in the paper is proposed that as every text, byzantine ekphraseis on artworks presuppose an audience or readership, i.e. the one the author had in mind and on the basis of which he encoded his message. In order to decode this message and by extension to extract any information about the described works of art we must aim to discover their "intended reader", and identify his or her "horizon of expectations. This proposal is tested in the study of a well known piece of this kind, Manasses's description of a mosaic floor with a depiction of Earth. The author's dialogue with the earlier tradition of ekphraseis, his readership's "horizon of expectations" combined with historical facts, allow us to suppose that Manasses is describing a composition with Xenia scenes and an asarotos motif (unswept floor) created in the early byzantine period and preserved in the Great Palace of Constantinople up to the twelfth century.

Address: Dr. Vicky Foskolou, Dept. of History and Archaeology, University of Crete, 74100 Rethymnon, Crete, Greece; foskolou@uoc.gr

This paper was first presented at a Symposium in honour of the Professors Emeritae Sophia Kalopissi-Verti and Maria Panayotidi-Kesisoglou held at the University of Athens on 30 January – 1 February 2014. I want to thank Valerie Nunn for providing, with great care as always, the English translation.

I. Ekphraseis and works of art: a historiographical overview

> The works of sculpture are indeed beautiful and graceful … but painting, i.e. the skilful mixing of colors and everything that is decorated with dyes by people, is no less beautiful. I even think that this art is better than sculpture, because the artist can depict the shadows, the roughness of the skin and every kind of complexion, a blush, blond hair, an aged, wrinkled and strict face, the sweetness, grace and radiance of beauty and so many other things, that sculpture would achieve with difficulty or would be totally unable to capture. There are many works of painting and sculpture, from artists like Phidias, Praxiteles, Lysippos and Parrhasius, famous even nowadays.

One might think the above excerpt came from the pen of some Roman author or from an art theorist of the Renaissance. Yet neither would be true. It comes from a scholar who lived and taught in twelfth-century Constantinople, Constantine Manasses. And it is the introduction to an *ekphrasis*, i.e. a rhetorical description, of a mosaic.[1] The hierarchical ranking of the fine arts with painting at the top and the reference to the artists of antiquity are rhetorical *topoi* and often found in texts of this kind.[2] This is not fortuitous; it is due to a large degree to the fact that the ekphraseis had their roots in the so called *progymnasmata*, i.e. the schoolboy exercises that were at the heart of Byzantine teaching on the art of rhetoric.[3]

---

1 The passage comes from a text by Constantine Manasses entitled *Ekphrasis on images on a circular piece of marble* (*Ἔκφρασις εἰκονισμάτων ἐν μαρμάρῳ κυκλοτερεῖ*), see O. Lampsidis, Der vollständige Text der *Ἔκφρασις γῆς* von Konstantinos Manasses. *JÖB* 41 (1991) 189–205. Cf. text with Modern Greek translation in P. Agapitos/M. Hinterberger, Εικών και Λόγος. Έξι βυζαντινές περιγραφές έργων τέχνης. Athens 2006, 50–57, here 50–51.

2 The notion of a hierarchy in the arts and the supremacy of painting goes back to Philostratos's *Imagines:* Philostratos the Elder, Εικόνες, transl., intr., comm. D. Plantzos. Athens 2006, 76–79. On the reference to the artists of antiquity, see C. Mango, Antique statuary and the Byzantine beholder. *DOP* 17 (1963) 64–66; H. Maguire, Truth and convention in Byzantine descriptions of works of art. *DOP* 28 (1974) 128, 138–139, note 142.

3 R. Webb, Ekphrasis, imagination and persuasion in ancient rhetorical theory and practice. Farnham 2009, 14, 17, 39–59. As a rhetorical exercise, an ekphrasis was a speech that aimed to conjure up for the listener a picture of the object being described, which could be people, things or places, see Webb 51–56. As Webb has stressed, unlike in modern scholarship, where the ekphrasis is identified exclusively with descriptions of works of art and considered a separate literary genre, in antiquity and in Byzantium the term originally referred more generally to a particular speech technique (Webb 5–7, 28–37). See also, R. Webb, Ekphrasis ancient and modern: the invention of a genre. *Word and Image* 15 (1999) 7–18.

As a rhetorical form, and consequently part of the education that the religious and administrative elite acquired throughout this period,[4] Byzantine *ekphraseis*, whether as stand-alone texts, such as the one by Manasses quoted above, or as descriptions embedded in other, longer, literary works, [5] were based on similar texts from antiquity as regards their language, general structure and the use of *topoi* and rhetorical tropes. [6]

This has raised the question as to how far these texts can be relied upon as historical sources for the study or even the reconstruction of the works of art they describe. In other words to what extent Byzantine authors were observing or had in their mind's eye an actual work of art when composing an ekphrasis or whether perhaps the works described, whether real or imaginary, were simply an excuse to show off their rhetorical skills and their knowledge of ancient literature. In other words were they genuine descriptions or literary exercises based on earlier written models?[7]

The answer to this question has gone from reflecting the positive approach of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when ekphraseis were thought to be a useful, albeit rather cryptic source of archaeological evidence,[8] to total denial of their evidentiary value. This approach is best encapsulated in the com-

4 On rhetoric as a lynchpin of higher education in Byzantium, see the brief summary in M. Whitby, Rhetorical questions, in L. James (ed.), A Companion to Byzantium. Oxford 2010, 240 – 244. On the importance and the uses of rhetoric in Byzantine society, see M. Mullett, Rhetoric, theory and the imperative of performance, in E. Jeffreys (ed.), Rhetoric in Byzantium. 35th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies. Farnham 2003, 151 – 160.

5 On ekphrasis as a literary genre, see H. Hunger, Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner I. Munich 1978, 170 – 188. E. Mitsi / P. Agapitos, Εἰκὼν καὶ λόγος: Ἡ "ἔκφρασις" ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαία στὴ βυζαντινὴ λογοτεχνία, in Agapitos/Hinterberger (as footnote 1 above) 15 – 38, especially 32 – 38.

6 On commonplaces, see Maguire, Truth and convention (as footnote 2 above). For a discussion of the relationship between the theoretical texts of the late antique tradition of *progymnasmata* and Byzantine ekphraseis, see R. Webb, *Ekphraseis* of buildings in Byzantium: theory and practice, in V. Vavřínek / P. Odorico / V. Drbal (eds.), Ekphrasis. La représentation des monuments dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slave. Réalités et imaginaires. *Byzantinoslavica* 69/3 (suppl.). Prague 2011, 20 – 32.

7 See a historiographical analysis of the question with corresponding bibliography in the very illuminating text by Margaret Mullett presenting the conclusions from the symposium *Ekphrasis. La représentation des monuments* (as footnote 6 above) 265 – 275.

8 P. Legrand, Descriptions des œuvres d'art et de l'Eglise des Saints Apôtres de Constantinople. Paris 1896 and P. Friedländer, Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius. Leipzig 1912 are typical of this approach.

parison – in Cyril MANGO's famous phrase – to a "distorting mirror",[9] through which these authors present not just the works of art, but more generally the reality of the Byzantine world, because, despite living in that world, they seem to speak from another, i.e. the world of antiquity. [10]

On the other hand Henry MAGUIRE has argued that, despite their rhetorical commonplaces (topoi) and their borrowings from earlier writings, ekphraseis may conceal spontaneous observations by Byzantine writers of the described works of art and often reflect not only changes in iconography but also the new attitudes which lay behind these changes. Thus, he suggested using a philological approach to "scrape away" the layers of rhetorical tradition in order to "reveal" the artistic creations described there.[11]

Subsequently Ruth MACRIDES and Paul MAGDALINO introduced another important aspect of the question, one which had hitherto been overlooked: that of the context, i.e. how and in what circumstances an ekphrasis had been composed and the reason for its existence.[12] In other words they suggested that in order to interpret and understand the ekphraseis one had to establish what they term "the historical and occasional context", evidence which – though they themselves acknowledge it is often difficult to pin down – determines the historicity of texts.

The historicity of texts is centre stage once again in an article by Liz JAMES and Ruth WEBB from the early nineties.[13] Using the relatively new methods of cultural studies, developed in the 1960s in the Anglo-Saxon world, and critiquing MAGUIRE's stance, they proposed the exact opposite of his thesis, i.e. that the "veil of rhetoric" is not simply a *pala* hung before the works of art, but has his-

9 This phrase refers to Byzantine literature in general, see C. MANGO, Byzantine literature as a distorting mirror. Oxford 1974. I use it both because it has become virtually proverbial and has influenced the study of Byzantine literature for many years and because MANGO is the prime example of a scholar who has doubted the originality and by extension the reliability of the ekphraseis as sources, see esp. MANGO, Antique statuary (as footnote 2 above).

10 On the decisive influence of this opinion not just on the study of Byzantine literature in general but also on more recent theoretical approaches to it, see the important article by M. MULLETT, Dancing with deconstructionists in the gardens of the muses. *BMGS* 14 (1990) 258–275.

11 Especially in his article: Truth and convention (as footnote 2 above), but also more generally in his later studies, Henry MAGUIRE has taken a similar approach, above all in his monograph: Art and eloquence in Byzantium. Princeton 1981. For a general critique of this approach cf. MULLETT, Rhetoric and theory (as footnote 4 above) 157–160.

12 R. MACRIDES/P. MAGDALINO, The architecture of *ekphrasis:* construction and context of Paul the Silentary's poem on Hagia Sophia. *BMGS* 12 (1988) 47–82, esp. 80–82.

13 L. JAMES/R. WEBB, "To understand ultimate things and enter secret places": ekphrasis and art in Byzantium. *Art History* 14 (1991) 1–17. See also R. WEBB, The aesthetics of sacred space: narrative, metaphor, and motion in *Ekphraseis* of church buildings. *DOP* 53 (1999) 59–74.

toricity and can tell us a lot about the cultural attitudes and literary system of the period and the society that produced them. Ultimately, these texts do not interest us as evidence of works of art, but as a live reaction to them. In other words, according to JAMES and WEBB, we shall not find information about the works per se in the ekphraseis, but about how they were seen and how they were received by writers and their audiences.[14]

Since then, with no new, clearly expressed overview on Byzantine ekphraseis,[15] the debate over the "truth" of the works described has been marginalized, while even the works themselves have generally been viewed as commonplaces, *topoi*, i.e. a necessary convention for the author to articulate his opinions or the perceptions of the period. A typical example is seen in Lucy GRIG's analysis of *ekphraseis* describing Late Antique artistic depictions of the lives of saints, which she believes to be inspired exclusively from similar literary texts and to offer absolutely no evidence of actual works of art.[16] On the other hand, some recent historians of Byzantine art continue to take a more positive view, reminiscent of the scholarly approach of the nineteenth century, regarding these texts a priori and with no need of any justification as "objective" descriptions of actual works of art.[17]

In what follows I shall use the text by Manasses cited above, building on the argument of MACRIDES and MAGDALINO, but above all that of JAMES and WEBB, in order to assert that the discussion about ekphraseis should now turn to looking at the reader and more especially the "implied reader", i.e. the one that is assumed in the text and that the process of reading it presupposes. In this approach I am basing myself on reader response criticism and reception theory, according to which no literary work has a constant and final meaning, but rather the meaning has to be negotiated with the reader in an interactive exchange.[18]

---

14 See also L. JAMES (ed.), Constantine of Rhodes, On Constantinople and the church of the Holy Apostles, with a new edition of the Greek text by I. VASSIS. Farnham 2012, esp. 219f. A similar position regarding *ekphrasis* in Greaco-Roman world is also expressed by J. ELSNER, Art and the Roman viewer. The transformation of art from the pagan world to Christianity. Cambridge 1995, 21–48, esp. 24–28; J. ELSNER, Genres of *Ekphrasis*. *Ramus* 31 (2002) 1–18.
15 Apart from the view expressed by R. NELSON, To say and to see. Ekphrasis and vision in Byzantium, in R. Nelson (ed.), Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance. Cambridge 2000, 143–167. In this essay, based on the research of historical anthropologists and the new focus in cultural studies on the history of aesthetics, NELSON has looked to ekphraseis for perceptions of visuality in Byzantium.
16 L. GRIG, Making martyrs in late antiquity. London 2004, 112–117, 135.
17 See, MULLETT, *Ekphrasis* (as footnote 7 above).
18 W. ISER, The implied reader: patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett. Baltimore/London 1974, 8–12. On the German school of reception theory more gener-

This argument and above all the shifting of the audience and more specifically the reader to centre stage in the interpreting of literary texts raise some basic questions, which the theoreticians of these two approaches are called upon to answer, such as: "Is it possible for literary texts to have as many signifieds as different readers can create?" and "In the end, are some readings–interpretations essentially more *valid* than others?"[19]

I will give an example to explain the different frameworks these questions create in which to approach the ekphraseis.

In Basilica A (known as the Basilica of Doumetios) in Nikopolis (second quarter of the sixth century), a very well-known mosaic pavement has survived in the north pastophorion, depicting a garden with fruit trees and birds (**fig. 1**).[20] The central subject is framed by a band of stylized waves and another with roundels containing birds. Outside that is a wider band with a seascape featuring fish and fishermen engaged in various activities. The verses that accompany the scene and reveal the subject of the mosaic state that it depicts the ocean with the earth in the middle along with all "… *ὅσα πνίει τε καὶ ἕρπει*".[21] Commenting on the relationship between the verses and the scene they accompany, Henry MAGUIRE traces the phrase back to Homer and considers it a typical example of a commonplace, in other words a quotation from the ancient Greek heritage which gives a misleading image of the work of art to which it refers. The phrase, he notes, does not fit the content of the scene, because, as he observes, there are

ally, see R.C. HOLUB, Reception theory. A critical introduction. London / New York 1984, 53 – 82. On the reader response theories that were developed for the most part by English-speaking scholars, see J.P. TOMKINS (ed.), Reader response criticism: from formalism to post-structuralism. Baltimore 1980.

19 T.F. DAVIS / K. WOMACK, Formalist criticism and reader-response theory. Hampshire / London 2002, 51. See also S.R. SULEIMAN, Introduction: varieties of audience-oriented criticism, in S.R. Suleiman / I. Crosman (eds.), The reader in the text. Essays on audience and interpretation. Princeton, New Jersey 1980, 3 – 45.

20 E. KITZINGER, Studies on late antique and early Byzantine floor mosaics: I. Mosaics at Nicopolis. *DOP* 6 (1951) 95 – 108, fig. 18.

21 Ὠκεανὸν περίφαντον ἀπίριτον ἔνθα δέδορκας / γαῖαν μέσσον ἔχοντα σοφοῖς ἰνδάλμασιν τέχνης/πάντα πέριξ φορέουσαν ὅσα πνίει τε καὶ ἕρπει / Δουμετίου κτέανον μεγαθύμου ἀρχιερῆος: KITZINGER, Studies (as footnote 20 above) 100 – 101, who translates it thus: "Here you see the famous and boundless ocean / Containing it its midst the earth / Bearing round about in the skillful images of art everything that breathes and creeps / The foundation of Doumetios, the great hearted archpriest".

no animals depicted on 'the earth' panel apart from birds and thus in this case the phrase does not *describe* this particular mosaic.[22]

In my opinion, however, the modern Greek translation of this phrase, i. e. *ό,τι αναπνέει και κινείται (πάνω στη γη)* [all that breathes and creeps (upon the earth)][23] describe the mosaic not just in a symbolic fashion but almost literally, because in my personal linguistic reading it is synonymous with a sense of the living world. This perception derives to some extent from the fact that this phrase has a proverbial character in modern Greek,[24] being very "familiar" to us because it comes from the modern Greek translation of the Iliad, which has been a basic part of the teaching of ancient Greek in secondary schools in Greece from at least the 1960s.[25]

In other words, for Maguire, an English-speaking reader, well versed in ancient Greek literature, the phrase is yet another reference to Homer and the verses a rhetorical exercise, whereas for me, a reader whose mother tongue is Greek, it is a phrase that means the earth and all its living creatures. Thus, despite the fact that both of us are reading the same text and recognize the same quotation, the meaning each of us conceives and *above all* the manner of relating the text to the image it accompanies are totally different.[26]

Thus, the coded messages inherent in a text or a work of art are susceptible to a variety of interpretations depending on the cultural background and person-

22 *Iliad* XVII 447: *πάντων ὅσσα* τε *γαῖαν ἔπι πνείει* τε *καὶ* ἕρπει. Maguire, Truth and convention (as footnote 3 above) 134 – 135. H. Maguire, Earth and ocean: the terrestrial world in early Byzantine art. University Park 1987, 23. On the origins of the phrase in Homer and the conventional use of Homeric quotations in similar contexts, see Kitzinger, Studies (as footnote 20 above) 101 note 76.

23 Διότι θλιβερώτερο τοῦ ἀνθρώπου δὲν ὑπάρχει, κανέν' ἀπ' ὅσα ἐκεῖ στὴν γῆν κινοῦνται καὶ ἀναπνέουν: modern Greek translation by Iakovos Polylas; cf. the translation by I.T. Kakride / N. Kazantzake: Πλάσμα κανένα από τον άνθρωπο πιο δύστυχο δεν είναι άλλο στη γης, απ' όσα πάνω της σαλεύουν κι ανασαίνουν.

24 K. D. Papadopoulos, Γνωμικά αρχαίων ελλήνων συγγραφέων. Athens 2008, 189.

25 Of the modern Greek translations of the Iliad that have been used in schools the most important and enduring are those of I. Polyla (1928) and I.T. Kakride / N. Kazantzake (1955), see: Centre for Greek Language (KEG), Portal for Greek Language, Bibliographical Guide to Modern Greek Translations of Ancient Greek Literature, available at http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/ancient_greek/bibliographies/translation/bibliography.html?start=0&q=πολυλάςshow=1 and http://www.greek-language.gr/greekLang/ancient_greek/bibliographies/translation/bibliography.html?start=7&taxonomy=Ομηρος&title=&translator=&keywords=&pub_date=&lang_type=&pub_form=&pub_type=&show=1 (last accessed 07/06/2016).

26 In other words we belong to different "interpretive communities", according to S. Fish, Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretive communities. Cambridge, MA 1980.

al experiences of the recipient, or even on the circumstances in which they encounter them. Nevertheless, every text partially controls this relationship with the reader, because it presupposes an audience or readership, i.e. the one the author had in mind and on the basis of which he encoded his message.[27] Consequently, in order to be able to decode this message and by extension to extract any information about the works of art described in the ekphraseis we must aim to discover their "intended reader",[28] and identify his or her "horizon of expectations". [29]

II. Constantine Manasses and his audience

There are just a few pieces of information, some from the sources but mostly from his owns works, that describe the life and times of Constantine Manasses, who was a typical example of a twelfth-century court poet.[30] He was born ca 1115 in Constantinople and was probably a teacher of rhetoric, who taught at the Patriarchal School. He was associated with some powerful families of the period, as is suggested by a series of *logoi* or speeches written for special occasions that he composed for some of their members. Moreover, between 1140 and 1142, he belonged to a group of intellectuals in the circle of the Sevastokratorissa Eirene,

---

27 On the interaction between text and reader according to the reception theory critics see Holub, Reception theory (as footnote 18 above) 82 – 107; Suleiman, Introduction (as footnote 19 above) 21 – 27.

28 The reader as an analytical tool was a preoccupation of theoreticians of reception and reader response theory, see Tomkins, Reader response criticism (as footnote 18 above) xv–xvii. Of the many "identities" assumed by this concept in the large volume of scholarly literature on the subject – which often relied on very fine distinctions – I select the so-called *intended reader* i.e. the one the writer had in mind in composing his work, a category that can be defined in historical terms and not just as a textual construct, see Holub, Reception theory (as footnote 18 above) 150 – 155. See also W. Schmid, Implied reader, in P. Hühn et al. (eds.), The living handbook of narratology. Hamburg. http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Implied_Reader [view date: 28 February 2018].

29 I.e. the system of cultural, ethical and literary references through which a reader approaches, understands and ultimately evaluates a written text: H.R. Jauss, Literary history as a challenge to literary theory, in H.R. Jauss, Toward an aesthetic of reception, trans. T. Bahti. Minneapolis 1982, 3 – 45.

30 O. Lampsidis, Constantini Manassis Breviarum chronicum. *CFHB*, 26. Athens 1996, xiii–xvii. P. Magdalino, In search of the Byzantine courtier: Leo Choirosphaktes and Constantine Manasses, in H. Maguire (ed.), Byzantine court culture from 829 to 1204. Washington, D.C. 1997, 161 – 165.

wife of Andronikos Komnenos, second son of the Emperor John II.[31] In 1160 – 61 he took part in a mission to the crusader kingdoms of Palestine in search of a bride for Manuel I Komnenos and described his experience in his *Hodoiporikon*, a long poem of around 800 fifteen-syllable verses. In addition to the rhetorical texts, his authorial œuvre contains the so-called *Breviarum Chronicum*, a lengthy chronicle covering the period from the Creation to Alexios I Komnenos's accession to the throne. He was commissioned to write this and dedicated it to the Sevastokratorissa Eirene; it was undoubtedly his most important work.[32] He also wrote a romance in verse[33] and a series of ekphraseis.[34] Some personal facts about him emerge from his literary œuvre, which are consistent with or more properly created by the social group to which he belonged, i.e. that of the intellectuals and writers of the capital who were linked through patronage relationships with members of the Comnenian dynasty and the imperial family.[35] In other words he is presented as being identified with that elite, detesting the common herd and the provinces and uncomfortable when far away from Constantinople.[36] Though he himself probably did not come from nor did he ul-

---

31 After Andronikos's death in 1142, he distanced himself from the sebastokratorissa who fell into disfavour, being accused of conspiracy by Manuel I: Lampsidis, Breviarum chronicum (as footnote 30 above). On Eirene Komnene's literary patronage see E.M. Jeffreys, The Sevastokratorissa Eirene as literary patroness: the monk Iakovos. *JÖB* 32/3 (1982) 63 – 72. O. Lampsidis, Zur Sebastokratorissa Eirene. *JÖB* 34 (1984) 91 – 105. E. Jeffreys, Western infiltration of the Byzantine aristocracy: some suggestions, in M. Angold (ed.), The Byzantine aristocracy IX to XIII centuries. Oxford 1984, 204 – 207; A. Rhoby, Verschiedene Bemerkungen zur Sebastokratorissa Eirene und zu Autoren in ihrem Umfeld. *Νέα Ῥώμη* 6 (2009) 305 – 336.

32 Lampsidis, Breviarum Chronicum (as footnote 30 above). I. Nilsson / E. Nyström, To compose, read and use a Byzantine text: aspects of the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses. *BMGS* 33 (2009) 42 – 63.

33 O. Mazal, Der Roman des Konstantinos Manasses. Überlieferung, Rekonstruktion, Textausgabe der Fragmente. *WBS*, 4. Vienna 1967. On the romance in this period in more general terms, see P.A. Agapitos, In Rhomaian, Frankish and Persian lands: fiction and fictionality in Byzantium and beyond, in P.A. Agapitos / L.B. Mortensen, Medieval narratives between history and fiction: from the centre to the periphery of Europe, c. 1100 – 1400. Copenhagen 2012, 235 – 367.

34 On Manasses' ekphraseis: I. Nilsson, Narrating images in Byzantine literature: the ekphraseis of Konstantinos Manasses. *JÖB* 55 (2005) 121 – 146; I. Nilsson, Constantine Manasses, Odysseus and the Cyclops, in Vavřínek/Odorico/Drbal, Ekphasis (as footnote 6 above) 124 – 126 with earlier bibliography.

35 In other words a member of a "middle class", educated not only to take on public office but also to serve the extended imperial family and aristocratic circles of the period. See P. Magdalino, The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143 – 1180. Cambridge 1993, 335 – 356.

36 C. Galatariotou, Travel and perception in Byzantium. *DOP* 47 (1993) 221 – 241, esp. 230 – 234.

timately belong to this class, he composed a tale of aristocratic glamour and at the same time the myth of his own social group.[37]

As regards his literary skills, like other writers of this period with similar social backgrounds and professional careers, one of the more general characteristics of his work is a basic tendency to "mix" different literary genres in one text, a tendency, which – combined with the overall spirit of enquiry into aesthetics and poetry in this period – resulted in a lively dialogue with ancient literature.[38]

Another characteristic of this group of twelfth-century writers is that their "intended readers", i.e. the audience that they were primarily addressing, are by and large known to us, and thus we can more easily access their knowledge of and taste in literature, and even the time and place of their experience as a reader/listener, in other words what H.R. Jauss calls their "horizon of expectations".[39] We are, for example, in a position to know with relative certainty what the Sevastokratorissa Eirene, a sometime patron of Manasses, read and the interest she took in ancient literature.[40]

Moreover, for a significant part of the literature produced in the twelfth century, i.e. both rhetorical texts and romances, we know both the circumstances in which they were first presented in public and thus their reception by that specif-

---

37 P. Magdalino, Byzantine snobbery, in: Byzantine Aristocracy (as footnote 31 above) 68 – 69.

38 Agapitos/Hinterberger, Εικών και Λόγος (as footnote 1 above), 43 – 45. For this tendency in the literature of the middle Byzantine period see P.A. Agapitos, Ancient models and novel mixtures: the concept of genre in Byzantine funerary literature from Photios to Eusthathios of Thessalonike, in G. Nagy/A. Stavrakopoulou (eds.), Modern Greek literature. Critical essays. New York/London 2003, 5 – 22, especially 12 – 15 on the Comnenian period. For a more wholistic interpretation of the phenomenon as the expression of a new identity among Byzantine scholars, see also R. Macrides/P. Magdalino, The fourth kingdom and the rhetoric of Hellenism, in P. Magdalino (ed.), The perception of the past in twelfth-century Europe. London 1992, 117 – 156, esp. 139 – 156.

39 On the patrons of twelfth-century authors, Magdalino, Manuel (as footnote 35 above) 345 – 352. On the intended audience of a specific literary genre cultivated by these writers, i.e. the erotic novels and romances, P.A. Agapitos, Writing, reading and reciting (in) Byzantine erotic fiction, in B. Mondrain (ed.), Lire et ecrire a Byzance. *College de France – CNRS: Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance*, 19. Paris 2006, 135 – 152.

40 E. Jeffreys, The sebastokratorissa Irene as patron, in L. Theis/M. Mullett/M. Grünbart (eds.), Female founders in Byzantium and beyond. *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 60/61 (2011/2012) 181 – 183. Cf. Jeffreys, Western infiltration (as footnote 31 above) who examines the choices and "demands" Eirene made when she commissioned literary works as possible factors in developments in literature in the period.

ic audience. I refer to the so-called *theatra*, i.e. the literary salons held by aristocratic patrons in that period.[41]

Though it is very probable that these twelfth-century literary circles did not all take the same form or function in the same way, they had three characteristics in common: 1) the reciting of rhetorical texts, in verse or prose, written for the most part to order; 2) an audience composed of the aristocratic patron (often a woman and a relative of the emperor), members of their family and a group of scholars, who did not belong to the same social class, but who shared a common code of aesthetic values; and finally, 3) not just a general predilection for ancient literature but more specifically a preference for and familiarity with the literature of the second and third centuries of our era, such as the romances of Heliodoros, Achilles Tatios and Longos and the *Imagines* of Philostratos. This is indicated by the intertextual borrowings from texts we know or assume were recited in such gatherings, showing the literary knowledge and tastes of authors and audiences.[42]

41 M. Mullett, Aristocracy and patronage in the literary circles of Comnenian Constantinople, in: Angold, Byzantine Aristocracy (as footnote 31 above) 173 – 197; Magdalino, Manuel (as footnote 35 above) 352 – 356. S. MacAlister, Dreams and suicides: the Greek novel from antiquity to the Byzantine empire. London / New York 1996, 155 – 156. For *theatron* in general, P. Marciniak, Byzantine theatron – a place of performance?, in M. Grünbart (ed.), Theatron. Rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter. Berlin / New York 2007, 277 – 285.

42 P.A. Agapitos, Η θέση της αισθητικής αποτίμησης σε μια "νέα" ιστορία της βυζαντινής λογοτεχνίας, in P. Odorico / P.A. Agapitos (eds.), Pour une "nouvelle" histoire de la littérature byzantine. Actes du Colloque international philologique. Nicosie, Chypre 25 – 28 mai 2000. *Dossiers Byzantins*, 1. Paris 2002, 202 – 207. On the 12th-century reception of 2nd–3rd-century literature, especially of the romances of Heliodoros and Tatios, see P. A. Agapitos, Narrative, rhetoric, and "drama" rediscovered: scholars and poets in Byzantium interpret Heliodorus, in R. Hunter (ed.), Studies in Heliodorus. Cambridge 1998, 125 – 156; P. A. Agapitos, In Rhomaian, Frankish and Persian lands (as footnote 33 above) 248 – 254, 259 – 60. Cf. Macrides/Magdalino, Fourth kingdom (as footnote 38 above) 125, 146 – 147. On the literary culture of the intended audience of Komnenian *theatra* Agapitos, Writing (as footnote 39 above). P. Roilos, "I grasp, oh artist, your enigma, I grasp your drama": reconstructing the implied audience of the twelfth-century Byzantine novel, in C. Cupane / B. Krönung (eds.), Fictional storytelling in the medieval eastern Mediterranean and beyond. Leiden/Boston 2016, 463 – 478.

III. Ekphrasis on images on a circular piece of marble: What is Manasses describing?

Manasses' text entitled: *Ekphrasis on images on a circular piece of marble* (Ἔκφρασις εἰκονισμάτων ἐν μαρμάρῳ κυκλοτερεῖ) must have been composed for delivery in a *theatron*, i.e. literary salon, as we can deduce from, among other things, its style and intense rhythmicality.[43]

It describes a mosaic composition, situated in an apartment "ἐν βασιλείοις", i.e. in the imperial palace in Constantinople.[44] This text has been commented on, mainly from an art historical point of view, as evidence for the mosaic it describes from as early as the beginning of the twentieth century.[45] The most important contributions in this respect are those of Henry Maguire and Theone Bazaiou.[46] Panagiotis A. Agapitos's reading of the text from a philological point of view, which accompanies his translation, is also very important.[47]

Manasses begins with an introduction about the hierarchy of the genres in the visual arts and about artists and works from antiquity, in order to explain how he is going to describe the mosaic out of admiration for the artist's skill and creativity (§ 1–2).

He goes on to tell us about the circumstances in which he saw the mosaic, which was in a building of the palace that served as a "retiring room of ancient emperors"[48] As he was strolling though the palace, it seems he was struck by the beauty of this apartment and his gaze was drawn to the amazing mosaic (§ 3). And while he was marvelling at the work there happened to be an art connoisseur by his side who pointed out to him the materials from which it was made, i.e. the tiny tesserae, thus emphasizing the skill of the artist and the refined results of his craftsmanship. After that he comments on the colour palette and tells

---

43 Agapetos/Hinterberger, Εικών (as footnote 1 above) 43. Nilsson, Odysseus and the cyclops (as footnote 34 above) 124–26.

44 For the text, see footnote 1 above.

45 L. Sternbach, Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte. *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts* 5 (1902) 74–83.

46 Maguire, Earth and ocean (as footnote 22 above) 74–76; Maguire, Truth and convention (as footnote 2 above) 116–117; Th. Bazaiou, Το εντοίχιο ψηφιδωτό της Γης στο Ιερό Παλάτιο και οι "εκφράσεις" του Κωνσταντίνου Μανασσή και Μανουήλ Φιλή: Ρεαλισμός και Ρητορεία. *Byzantina Symmeikta* 9 (1994) 95–115.

47 Agapetos/Hinterberger, Εικών (as footnote 1 above) 41–48, 175–177.

48 … βασιλέων δὲ παλαιοτέρων ὁ οἶκος ἦν εὐνατήριον, ibid. 52.

us about the basic principles of the composition, i.e. that it was circular and divided into segments and individual scenes (§4).

Next he proceeds to describe the subjects. In the centre is depicted a personification of *Earth* (*Terra*) in the form of a bust of a young girl with long hair, wearing a floral garland on her head. She is holding ears of corn and a variety of flowers conceal her probably semi-naked body (§ 5–7). At this point a short monologue, spoken by the Earth and in which she introduces herself, is inserted in the text (§ 8). Scattered around this personification were various animals and fruits. The author is at pains once again to make clear that the individual scenes were separated by black lines and arranged in a circle. (§ 9) A variety of fruits were depicted in the compartments – apples (§ 9), peaches (§ 10), pears (§ 11), pomegranates (§ 12) – along with birds eating them,[49] a cockerel trying to peck at a snail (§ 15), nuts, mixed with fruit and honey (§ 17), sea creatures and fish, including lobster and crab shells, garfish, scorpion fish and red mullet (§ 14, 16). Finally one last compartment depicted the leftovers from a banquet (§ 13). The text ends with more praise for the artist, not for his skill this time, but for choosing to depict the Earth with ears of corn, thus showing the most precious boon agriculture confers on man (§ 18).

Agapitos deems Manasses' text a typical example of the mixing of different genres, something that, as mentioned above, is a hallmark of the literature of the period. He also refers to a dialogue with earlier works, dating from the second to the tenth century, identifying and commenting on some of the intertextual borrowings.[50] The most characteristic of these is the adaptation of the Prologue from Philostratos's *Imagines*, which Manasses appropriates for his own introduction, adopting both the reference to the hierarchy in the visual arts and the poetic convention of the teacher expounding the meaning of the work being described.[51] He also notes the equally common motif of comparing word and image, which we encounter in the epilogue (§ 18), where the author informs us of his most serious objective in this project, which is to copy painting in words and to experiment with art.[52] This is a subject that first emerged in the

49 A bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) fluttering over the apples and a partridge tasting the pomegranates, ibid. 62, 64.
50 ibid. 43–47.
51 The role of the "student" that Manasses himself assumes is a convention introduced by Achilles Tatios (2nd c) in the story of *Leucippe and Clitophon*, see ibid. 45. See also S. Bartsch, Decoding the ancient novel. The reader and the role of description in Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius. Princeton 1989.
52 "Γέγραπται δέ μοι τὸ πᾶν περὶ τὴν μάρμαρον τέχνασμα καὶ εἰς ἀντιγραφὴν τῆς γραφῆς καὶ εἰς τέχνης ἀπόπειραν": Agapetos/Hinterberger, Εικών (as footnote 1 above) 72–73, 45.

legend of Daphnis and Chloe (2nd c. CE) and continued to crop up in studies on art and literature from the Renaissance right up to the mid-nineteenth century.[53] Finally, AGAPITOS points out how, apart from the intertextual borrowings, Manasses embellishes his description of the mosaic with references to well-known art works from antiquity, such as the celebrated bronze cow by Myron[54] and the Herakles Trihesperos by Lysippos,[55] something which he acknowledges may contribute to the contemporary reader's doubts as to the actual existence of the mosaic being described.[56] In other words AGAPITOS is broaching the well-known subject of commonplaces, though he does not expand upon it, noting that a Byzantine reader's perception of what was objective and real would be very different from that of a modern reader.

Art historians, by contrast, have taken this issue much further. Henry MAGUIRE, for example, has attempted to reconstruct and interpret the mosaic in question, an endeavour that Theone BAZAIOU later pursued, arriving at similar conclusions. Moreover BAZAIOU crowned her efforts with a sketched reconstruction of the mosaic (**fig. 2**).

MAGUIRE observed that the subjects and more generally the composition described by Manasses were part of the artistic repertoire of mosaic pavements of

53 R.N. LEE, *Ut picture poesis:* The Humanistic theory of painting. *The Art Bulletin* 22 (1940) 197 – 269. It is interesting to note that the theme of poetry as painting and the comparison of *logos* to *graphe* was particular topical among Byzantine writers of the twelfth century, see P.A. AGAPITOS, Poets and painters: Theodoros Prodromos' dedicatory verses of his novel to an anonymous Caesar. *JÖB* 50 (2000) 179 – 181.

54 One of the most celebrated works of Myron, which in the 5th c. BCE was set up on the Athens Acropolis. From there it was transported to Rome and, after the city's reconquest by the Byzantines in 546, to Constantinople. It is mentioned a great deal in the written sources from the early Hellenistic period right up to the 12th c., with the most typical examples being found in the collection of epigrams of the Palatine Anthology. In the 12th c., apart from Manasses, Tzetzes also mentions the work: see A. CORSO, La vacca di Mirone. *Numismatica et Antichità Classiche* 23 (1994) 49 – 91; S. GODHILL, What is ekphrasis for? *Classical Philology* 102/1 (Special Issues on Ekphrasis, ed. S. BARTSCH / J. ELSNER) 15 – 19. M. SQUIRE, Making Myron's cow moo? Ecphrastic epigram and the poetics of simulation. *American Journal of Philology* 131(4) (2010) 589 – 634.

55 On this famous bronze statue and its reception in Byzantium, see H. MAGUIRE, The depiction of sorrow in middle Byzantine art. *DOP* 31 (1977) 135 – 136.

56 Of course, as AGAPITOS himself notes, the bronze statue of Hercules was on public view in Constantinople in Manasses' day and apart from Manasses, Niketas Choniates also describes it in *Chronike diegesis* (ed. J.L. VAN DIETEN, Nicetae Choniatae Historia. *CFHB*, 11. Berlin 1975, 519 – 520), AGAPETOS/HINTERBERGER, Εικών (as footnote 1 above) 46 – 47. On these ancient works being an expression of the "appreciation" of ancient sculpture in 12th-century Constantinople, see NILSSON, Odysseus and the cyclops (as footnote 34 above) 133 – 136.

the fifth and sixth centuries and he produced a series of examples to substantiate this opinion, e. g. the basilica at Khalé in Lebanon (fifth century) and the Byzantine silk from the tomb of St Cuthbert at Durham (sixth–seventh century) (**fig. 3 – 4**). He went on to compare the mosaic with some key works of imperial iconography, such as the Missorium of Theodosius I (388 CE.), in which a personification of Earth is depicted in the lower part, offering up her bounty in a cornucopia to the ruler,[57] and the Barberini diptych (first half of the sixth century), in which the subject is embellished with the addition of a bust of Christ.[58] Maguire also adduces parallels with written sources, panegyrics and literary texts of the early Byzantine epoch that describe the power of the Byzantine emperor extending over the whole world, earth and ocean, to suggest that the mosaic Manasses was describing must date to this period and would have decorated an imperial bed-chamber, symbolizing the prosperity and global dimensions of the emperor's authority, an authority he derived from the Almighty.[59]

Nevertheless, the artistic parallels that Maguire deploys come above all from an ecclesiastical context, and in the examples of imperial art that he juxtaposes with them the emphasis is on the religious element.[60] Despite his attempt to associate the subject of the described mosaic with religious works and to give a Christian interpretation to the whole composition, or precisely because of these parallelisms, in the end the mosaic seems somewhat inappropriate to a place of rest. And, of course, the choice of specific iconographic motifs, i. e. the fruit and the food delicacies, looks even more unsuitable in general terms for the decoration of a bed-chamber.[61]

And yet it is from this quarter, i. e. the function of the place that the mosaic decorated, that we must seek the beginning of the thread that will unravel its meaning.

---

57 On the Missorium, see most recently R. E. Leader-Newby, Silver and society in late antiquity: functions and meanings of silver plate in the fourth to seventh centuries. Aldershot 2004, 11 – 49.

58 On the Barberini diptych, see : Byzance, l'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises. Exhibition catalogue Paris 1992, 63 – 65, no. 20 (D. Gaborit-Chopin).

59 Maguire, Earth and ocean (as footnote 22 above) 74 – 76.

60 For a different interpretation of the Missorium, see Leader-Newby, Silver (as footnote 57 above), who reads the figure of Earth, not only as a symbol of the abundance of the imperial dominion over the oikoumene, but also as a retrospective iconographic motif that goes back to the earliest imperial art of Augustus and associates Theodosius with the peaceful prosperity of the earlier Roman Empire.

61 This contradiction is also noted by Th. Bazaiou, Εντοίχιο ψηφιδωτό (as footnote 46 above) 114 – 115.

The word εὐνατήριον that Manasses uses to describe this space does not necessarily refer to a bedroom, or to be more precise, the orator's audience may not necessarily have understood him to be referring to a bedroom. And this is because the exact meaning of the word – which is derived from the verb εὐνάω, i.e. to go to bed, fall asleep – is unlikely to have been known to them. In ancient literature this word was used only by the tragic poets and then only on a few occasions, which can be counted on the fingers of one hand, while according to the *TLG* it is not found at all in the Byzantine period. By contrast the word εὐνή, i.e. couch, *is* noted in Byzantine literature. It is used, for example by Manasses himself in this sense,[62] though even this was most unlikely to have been understood by his contemporaries, as we can deduce from lexicographical definitions and comments on Homer by Eustathios of Thessalonike and Ioannes Tzetzes, who explain its meaning.[63] It is most likely that Manasses' ideal readers would have understood the word εὐνατήριον as meaning a room with couches, which could have been a triclinium, i.e. a dining room with couches for reclining – as the root of the word reveals – and by extension a reception room.[64]

This interpretation of the area in question does not exclude an association with an imperial bed-chamber, as has been shown by Bazaiou, who notes that the buildings of the Great Palace described as triclinia in the sources include both places to rest and reception halls in which meals could be set before VIPs.[65]

62 Εὐνὴ καὶ νὺξ καὶ φίλημα, περιπλοκὴ καὶ κοίτη ψυχῶν θεραπετήρια τοῖς ἐρωτοκεντήτοις: Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Καλλιθέα 111.1 (Mazal, as in footnote 33 above, 192).

63 Ioannes Tzetzes: Εὐνὴ τρία σημαίνει τὴν κοίτην τὴν διατριβὴν καὶ τὴν ἄγκυραν τοῦ πλοίου ὡς νῦν (C. Lolos, Der unbekannte Teil der Ilias-Exegesis des Ioannes Tzetzes [A 97–609]. *Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie*, 130. Königstein 1981, vers. 435/93). Eustathios of Thessalonike: Λέχος μὲν ἡ κλίνη, πυκινὴ οὖσα ἵνα φέρειν ἔχει στεῤῥῶς τὰ ἐπικείμενα ... εὐνὴ δὲ τὸ παρ' ἡμῖν στρῶμα (G. Stallbaum, Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam. Leipzig 1825–1826 [repr. Hildesheim 1970], II 301) and *Etymologicum Magnum:* Ἡ δὲ λέξις παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ τρία σημαίνει, τὴν κοίτην ... καὶ τὴν ἄγκυραν καὶ τὴν διατριβὴν (T. Gaisford, Etymologicum Magnum. Oxford 1848 [repr. Amsterdam 1965] 393, 50]. It is interesting to note that the definitions of the word *eune* given by these 12th-century authors are not identical, a fact that suggests that it was not a common word in that period.

64 K.M.D. Dunbabin, Triclinium and stibadium, in W.J. Slater (ed.), Dining in a classical context. Ann Arbor 1991, 121–148, esp. 123–128. On the decoration and equipment of such rooms in Late Antiquity, K.M.D. Dunbabin, The Roman banquet. Images of conviviality. Cambridge 2003, 164–174.

65 Th. Bazaiou, Εντοίχιο ψηφιδωτό (as footnote 46 above) 97–98. It is interesting to note that, as S.P. Ellis has maintained, in late antique Roman "palaces", three different types of reception rooms appear, in various combinations, i.e. the *triclinium*, the audience room (usually a large hall with an apse) and a new type of grand dining room with conches. The reason for this

This latter use makes Manasses' claim to frequent the place and to have had an opportunity of peeking into the room and admiring the mosaic that decorated it all the more credible. After all, had it been in a private area it would not have been so easy for him to do so, even if it was no longer being used in his day.

When we proceed to look for the individual subjects of the mosaic in secular contexts we observe that they were already familiar from the iconographic repertoire of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The personification of the Earth (*Ge*) was a very popular iconographic subject in art in all its manifestations.[66] It is very often found in mosaic pavements in private houses in North Africa and Syria, above all in triclinia or in the adjacent ancillary spaces. Later known examples are found in mosaic floors dated to the early sixth century CE in private residences in Antioch (**fig. 5–6**).[67] In these examples, *Ge* is usually represented holding up a swathe of cloth containing fruits in front of her, an iconographic theme that implied the bounty of earth and was connected with the host's hospitality.[68]

The fruit, animals and fish are all reminiscent of the so-called *Xenia* scenes.[69] In other words they are the still lives with fruits and other foodstuffs

---

variety was the desire for privacy and the need to differentiate between various classes of guest. The "old fashioned" triclinia were probably reserved for the most intimate guests and were usually not clearly separated from the private areas of the villas, see S. P. Ellis, Power, architecture, and decor: how the late Roman aristocrat appeared to his guest, in E. K. Gazda (ed.), Roman art in the private sphere: new perspectives on the architecture and decor of the domus, villa, and insula. Ann Arbor 1991, 117–134, esp. 122–123.

66 *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* VII/1. Zurich/Munich 1994, s.v. Tellus, Ge, 879–889. See also Ch. Kondoleon, A gold pendant in the Museum of Fine Arts Virginia. *DOP (*1987) 307–308, note 9, 10; R. Hachlili, Ancient mosaic pavements: themes, issues, and trend: selected studies. Leiden 2009, 179–180. On this subject in Coptic textiles, see H. Maguire, The mantle of the earth. *Illinois Classical Studies* 12 (1987) 221–228. See also H. Maguire, Garments pleasing to God: the significance of domestic textile designs in the early Byzantine period. *DOP* 44 (1990) 217, on the apotropaic function of the subject on textiles.

67 I am referring to the mosaic from the *triclinium* in the House of Aion in Antioch and the one from a room in the so-called House of the Worcester Hunt in the Antiochean suburb of Daphne, see L. Becker/Ch. Kondoleon (eds.), The arts of Antioch. Art historical and scientific approaches to Roman mosaics and a catalogue of the Worcester Art Museum Antioch Collection. Worcester 2005, nos. 7 222–227 fig. 5, no. 8 228, fig. 3.

68 On the symbolism of the personification of the Earth in reception halls and its association with the concept of generous hospitality, see Becker/Kondoleon, The Arts of Antioch, ibid. 226.

69 C. Balmelle et al., Recherches franco-tunisiennes sur la mosaique de l'Afrique antique 1: XENIA. *Collection de l'École Française de Rome*, 125. Rome 1990. K. Dunbabin, Mosaics of the Greek and Roman world. Cambridge 1999, 298, 310–311. Dunbabin, Roman banquet (as footnote 64 above) 64, 157–161.

that were depicted on the walls and floors of reception halls, and particularly of triclinia, in the villas of the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean, symbolizing the sumptuous hospitality that those who had commissioned them offered their guests. The subject had a symbolic but also a convivial character and its roots go back to the Hellenistic period.[70] It is a widespread motif in Roman art, as we can see from the numerous examples of *Xenia* identified in wall-paintings and mosaic pavements in Campanian cities and Rome itself from the end of the second century BCE, but above all in mosaic floors in banqueting halls in North Africa, the Near East, in the West and in Greece right up to the sixth century CE.[71] It is also interesting to note that the images of foodstuffs from the second century CE are usually depicted as individual motifs in a decorative, foliate scroll or in square frames, an arrangement highly reminiscent of Manasses' description(**fig. 7–8**).[72] It is also important to note that all the individual iconographic motifs mentioned by Manasses as surrounding the central medallion containing the Earth on the mosaic in Constantinople are found in extant *Xenia* compositions. Peaches, apples and pomegranates are depicted on first-century painted panels from Pompeii and Herculaneum,[73] while an incredible variety of fish can be seen in many mosaic programmes (**fig. 9–10**).[74]

Of course, it is true, as Maguire has shown, that fruit, plants, animals, birds and fish all belong to the iconographic repertoire adopted on the floors of the early Christian basilicas.[75] Nevertheless there is a basic difference between

---

70 On the symbolism of the *Xenia* scenes, their relation to written sources and their place in Roman culture, see J. H. D'Arms, The culinary reality of Roman upper-class convivia: integrating texts and images. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46 (2004) 428–450.

71 C. Balmelle, Quelques images de mosaïques à *Xenia* hors de Tunisie, in: *Xenia* (as footnote 68 above) 51–66. For the *xenia* paintings in Campanian cities see J. M. Croisille, Les natures mortes campaniennes. Répertoire descriptif des peintures de nature morte du Musée National de Naples, de Pompéi, Herculanum et Stabies. *Collection Latomus*, 76. Brussels 1965.

72 Balmelle, Quelques images (as footnote 71 above) 57, 63. See also Dunbabin, Roman banquet (as footnote 64 above) 157–158, fig. 91.

73 See, for example, the wall-painting with apples, grapes and pomegranates from the House of Iulia Felix in Pompeii (D'Arms, Culinary reality, as footnote 70 above, fig. 5, and the still life with peaches from Herculaneum, now in the Archaeological Museum of Naples (Croisille, Natures morte, as footnote 71 above, pl. XVII). On still lives in Roman painting, see also A. Donati (ed.), Romana pictura. La pittura romana dalle origine all' età bizantina. Exhibition catalogue, Milan 1988, 276–277. I. Baldassarre et al., Pittura romana. Dall'ellenismo al tardo-antico. Milan 2002, 90–91, 234–239.

74 On depictions of fish and poultry in Roman mosaic pavements, see B. Andreae, Antike Bildmosaiken. Mainz 2003, 126–159, 177–183.

75 Maguire, Earth and ocean (as footnote 22 above); H. Maguire, Nectar and illusion. Nature in Byzantine art and literature. Oxford 2012, 11–22.

both the mosaic described by Manasses and *Xenia* scenes and Christian compositions featuring animals. In the case of the former we find mainly representatives of edible flora and fauna alongside some cooked food, whereas the floors of Christian basilicas show a much greater range of similar subjects with various symbolisms, such as wild animals, whether alone or with human figures in hunting scenes.[76]

Moreover the detailed accounts Manasses gives of certain motifs and the particular emphasis he attributes to them – such as the noisy cockerel frantically pecking at the snails crawling on the ground, which we find depicted in almost identical fashion in extant *Xenia* scenes, e. g. on the first-century mosaic from Rome depicting guinea fowl pecking at snails – leave no doubt as to the secular nature and the specific content of the image he is describing (**fig. 11**).[77]

But what encourages us above all to see the Constantinopolitan mosaic as having a secular character is the section showing the leftovers from a feast. The description makes it quite clear that we are dealing with a depiction of an 'unswept floor'. As Pliny tells us, the subject was created by one Sosos, a famous mosaicist from Pergamum of the first half of the second century BCE.[78] Some centuries later, as the extant examples show, it became quite popular and the most famous one is the second-century CE mosaic in Rome, signed by Herakleitos, now in the eponymous room in the Vatican (**fig. 12**).[79] Surviving examples,

---

76 A more typical example is that of the mosaic pavement in the basilica of the priest John, on Mt Nebo in Jordan (6th c.), in the centre of which the Earth is depicted, exactly as Manasses describes it, bust length and holding in her outstretched hands a swathe of material containing fruit. However, in that case it was surrounded by acanthus leaves, among which were depicted inter alia wild animals and male figures in abbreviated hunting scenes, see M. Picirillo, Madaba, le chiese e i mosaici. Milan 1989, 190 – 92. For the symbolism of this particular composition, Maguire, Earth and Ocean (as footnote 22 above) 69 – 72. For the symbolism of the hunt, and especially of hunting wild animals, A. Drandaki, "Υγιαίνω χρω κυρι(ε)". A late Roman brass bucket with a hunting scene. *Benaki Museum* 2 (2002) 44 – 46.

77 D'Arms (as footnote 70 above) 436, fig.3. See also Andreae, Bildmosaiken (as footnote 74 above) fig. 182 – 83

78 M. Renard, Pline l'Ancien et le motif de l'*asarôtos oikos*. Hommages à Max Niedermann. *Collection Latomus*, 23. Bruxelles 1956, 307 – 314. It should be noted that Maguire mentions as a comparison to the mosaic of Manasses the only example of an *asarotos oikos* found on a basilica floor, which was from Sidi Abich in Tunisia (now lost), see Earth and ocean (as footnote 22 above) 99 note 13.

79 K. Werner, Die Sammlung antiker Mosaiken in den Vatikanischen Museen. Città del Vaticano 1998, 260 – 275. Andreae, Bildmosaiken (as footnote 74 above) 46 – 51.

but above all the texts that describe similar mosaic pavements, reveal how widespread the subject was, with examples dating to as late as the sixth century CE.[80]

With their highly naturalistic depictions of half-eaten dishes throwing shadows on a white ground, the unswept floor mosaics created a trompe l'oeil effect of a surface littered with leftovers. This illusionistic technique conjured up the extravagance and luxury of the banquets given in that very room and set the mood for the guest, who was thus being promised that the floor would soon be in the same state as he saw it in the mosaic! (**fig. 13**)[81]

The passage from Manasses text refers to a jumbled collection of animal bones, poultry feathers, fishbones and the head of a red mullet, just as on the surviving examples that we can see. At the same time he describes with particular skill a greedy mouse, on the one hand timorous and on the other famished, homing in on a fishhead.[82] A tiny mouse gnawing a nut is also represented along with the debris of all sorts of food in the Roman mosaic in the Vatican (**fig. 14**). The depiction of this exceptional detail in an extant composition of the *asarotos oikos* gives us yet another argument for the interpretation of the mosaic described by Manasses proposed above.

V. Ultimately, what can the ekphraseis tell us about the works of art they are describing?

The striking coincidence between text and image might seem to offer persuasive evidence of the interpretation of the mosaic described in the ekphrasis of Manasses and perhaps even of its existence.

This was certainly how I felt until I discovered that exactly the same passage as Manasses used to describe the greedy mouse was employed word for word in a schedographic text of the same period entitled "The [grammatical] sketches of

80 On this subject and its interpretations, see most recently, E. M. Moormann, La belezza dell'immondezza. Raffigurazioni di rifuiti nell'arte ellenistica e romana, in X. Dupré Raventós / J. A. Remolá (eds.), Sordes urbis: la eliminación de residuos en la ciudad romana. Rome 2000, 75–94, which assembles all the known examples (p. 83–84). On the combination of the unswept floor motif with *Xenia* scenes, see also K. M. D. Dunbabin, The mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in iconography and patronage. Oxford 1978, 124–125, 260.

81 G. Hagenow, Der nichtausgekehrte Speisesaal. *Rheinisches Museum* 121/3–4 (1978) 260–275; H. Meyer, Zu neueren Deutungen von Asarotos Oikos und kapitolinischem Traubenmosaik. *AA* (1977) 104–110; Moormann (as footnote 80 above) 92–94.

82 See Appendix text no. 1.

a mouse" (Τὰ Σχέδη τοῦ Μυός), the authorship of which is attributed either to Manasses himself or to his contemporary Theodore Prodromos.[83]

This detail will naturally undermine the modern reader's trust in the objectivity of the description, though I doubt that it would have had the same effect on Manasses' contemporary audience.

Most probably they would have indentified the image of the timorous beast that one minute presses forward and the next takes a step back with a description of a hare in an ekphrasis on a *Xenia* image by Philostratos: "He sits on his haunches moving his forelegs a little and slowly lifting his ears, but he also keeps looking with all his eyes and tries to see behind him as well, so suspicious is he and always cowering with fear."[84] The audience of Manasses would have also recognized another Philostratian 'image', once again part of a description of a *Xenia* scene, in the description of the burst figs from which the sticky sweetness is flowing and the sparrow that is nibbling at them and enjoying the juice that the rhetor mentions in the section with the nuts and fruit.[85] This instance of intertextuality, in this case relating to the specific theme of *Xenia*, is not the only one that links the ekphrasis by Manasses with Philostratos's text.[86]

Nevertheless I think it is both another piece of supporting evidence for the interpretation of the mosaic I am proposing and also for the way in which, according to Ruth Webb, writers of *ekphraseis* entered into a dialogue with their

---

83 See Appendix text no. 2. J.Th. Papademetriou, Τὰ σχέδη τοῦ μυός: new sources and text, in: Classical studies presented to Ben Edwin Perry by his students and colleagues at the University of Illinois, 1924–60. *Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, 58. Urbana 1969, 219–222. Most recently on this text, see P. Marciniak, A pious mouse and a deadly cat: the *Schede tou Myos*, attributed to Theodore Prodromos. *GRBS* 57 (2017) 507–527 with an English translation of the text.

84 Ὁ μὲν ἐν τῷ οἰκίσκῳ λαγωὸς δικτύου θήραμα, κάθηται δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν σκελῶν ὑποκινῶν τοὺς προσθίους καὶ ὑπεργείρων τὸ οὖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ βλέπει παντὶ τῷ βλέμματι, βούλεται δὲ καὶ κατόπιν ὁρᾶν δ' ὑποψίαν καὶ τὸ ἀεὶ πτήσειν: Philostratos, Imagines (as footnote 2 above) 322–323 (English translation by A. Fairbanks, Cambridge MA 1931). It goes without saying that the iconographic motif of the scared, captive hare is often part of *Xenia* compositions, see Croisille, Quelques images (as footnote 71 above) pl. LXXVII/148, LXXIX/152.

85 Appendix, text no. 3–4. The iconographic motif of little birds nibbling figs is also found in Xenia compositions, see Croisille, Quelques images (as footnote 71 above) pl. LXXIII/139.

86 See, for example, the description of apples in which Manasses mentions: τοιούτοις ἐγὼ μήλοις ἀκούω προσπαίζειν ἀλλήλοις τοὺς ἔρωτας καὶ οἷα σφαίραις μηλοβολεῖν, (Agapetos/Hinterberger, Εικών και Λόγος, as footnote 1 above, 60), which clearly refers back to Philostratos's image of the Erotes, in which "two of them are throwing an apple back and forth" (τῶν ἄλλων δύο μὲν αὐτῶν ἀντιπέμπουσιν μῆλον ἀλλήλοις: Imagines, as footnote 2 above, 98). From the same Philostratian image Manasses also appropriates the invention of the painted depiction that is so lifelike that it is imbued with its own smell, see Appendix text no. 5–6.

audiences/readers, connecting with the imaginations of their listening public by exploiting stock images from their accumulated experiences as viewers or readers, rather than giving an accurate description of their subject in words.[87] Such “stock images” include the animal that takes a step back and seems to be looking fearfully all around, the little bird enjoying a fig, the ripe, burst fig from which the juice is flowing and the poultry using their beaks to peck at snails. In other words they are subjects that correspond to literary and artistic motifs from Late Antiquity. Manasses’ audience could decipher these motifs and understand them according to their “horizon of expectations”, above all, of course, as literary “images” derived from similar, earlier texts, such as the work of Philostratos.

Thus it is clear that the text is describing a mosaic that Manasses’ audience could have recreated in their imaginations, obviously not as a work of religious or imperial symbolism, but giving it a purely secular interpretation and “antiquarian” content.

Naturally the mental image that Manasses’ audience would have created in their heads could have been based *exclusively* on their literary knowledge and perhaps even on their knowledge of the very text by Philostratos mentioned above.

Acknowledging this brings us almost right back to square one, as it raises once again the thorny question of whether, in the end, Manasses was describing an existing mosaic. In other words, though we can confidently state that the “ancient” literary descriptions of *Xenia* images belonged to the horizon of expectations of both Manasses and his public, are we justified in asserting that a similar mosaic belonged to the wider horizon of their experience of everyday life?

And to put the question in an even more specific fashion: Could a mosaic pavement with a *Xenia* scene and an “unswept floor” have been made to decorate an imperial reception room in Constantinople somewhere between the early fourth and the sixth or seventh century and still be around in the twelfth, so that Manasses and perhaps some of his audience could actually have seen it?

It is a fact that the mosaic pavement that Manasses describes in the way I have pieced together, both as regards the individual motifs and above all as regards the way they are combined, points directly at Graeco-Roman tradition and

87 These ‘images’, whether visual or literary, used by the authors of *ekphraseis* to address their audience’s imagination, came from their shared cultural background, in the shaping of which their education in rhetoric played an important part. According to Webb, this strategy used by rhetoricians to communicate with their audiences was taken up universally and continued to be employed by later authors, see Webb, Aesthetics (as footnote 13 above) 64 – 66. Webb, Imagination (as footnote 3 above) 122 – 129. Webb, Buildings (as footnote 6 above) 32.

to the period before the fourth century CE. But on the other hand, one of the few architectural remains of the Great Palace that survives today is a mosaic pavement of just such a secular and archaizing nature. And it is precisely its retrospective character that has led to there being no consensus among scholars on its dating. This famous pavement from a large peristyle courtyard in the imperial palace, a panorama of mythological and bucolic subjects mixed with genre scenes, has been attributed to a range of dates from the fourth to the early eighth century. However, nowadays, based on archaeological data, it can be securely pinned down to the first half of the sixth century.[88] The Great Palace mosaic is one of the most impressive examples among the many works, artifacts of the minor arts and mosaic pavements that reveal the constant presence of classical themes in the Early Byzantine period.[89] A recent and equally impressive addition to this group is a mosaic floor, also from Constantinople, that represents a triumphant Dionysos surrounded by personifications of the Seasons and his frenzied retinue. The mosaic decorated the *triclinium* of an estate in Psamathia (Samatya), a wealthy suburb of the capital along the shores of the Propontis and is dated to the second half of the fifth century.[90] Both these Constantinopolitan mosaics are witnesses to the continuing popularity of pagan imagery and to the enduring tradition of Graeco-Roman secular life and Greek *paideia*. And it is precisely in this tradition that a mosaic pavement like the one I think Manasses was describing would fit very well.

However, the most important indication that a pavement with depictions of *Xenia* could have formed part of the decoration of the Great Palace in Constantinople is found in the one-time capital of the Western Empire – and capital of the Ostrogoth kingdom for roughly half a century – Ravenna. Here the Ostrogoth

---

88 W. Jobst / B. Erdal / Ch. Gurtner, Istanbul, the Great Palace Mosaic. The story of its exploration, preservation and exhibition 1983 – 1997. Istanbul 1997, with earlier bibliography.

89 There has been a great deal of scholarly literature on this issue. As regards the archaeological aspects and above all the objects of the minor arts the section entitled “Classical Realm” in the exhibition catalogue *The Age of Spirituality* gives the best description (K. Weitzmann, ed., The Age of Spirituality. Late antique and early Christian art, third to seventh century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1979, 126 – 262.) See also Leader-Newby, Silver and society (as footnote 57 above), 124 – 160, especially for silver objects with mythological themes. Among the more recent contributions regarding mosaic pavements that of G.W. Bowersock, Mosaics as history: the Near East from late antiquity to Islam. Cambridge/London 2006, 31 – 64 handles the subject succinctly. For a more recent presentation, see also B. Fourlas, Das antike Erbe in der byzantinischen Kunst, in B. Fourlas / V. Tsamakda (eds.), Wege nach Byzanz. Mainz 2011, 30 – 39.

90 Ö. Dalgiç, The Triumph of Dionysos in Constantinople: a late fifth-century mosaic in context. *DOP* 69 (2015) 15 – 49.

ruler Theodoric, who had grown up as a hostage in Constantinople, developed a large-scale building programme to stamp his authority on the city.[91] The largest part of this programme was the construction of a palace for which the model was the Great Palace. The similarities between the two complexes, not only as regards the choice of site and general plan but also the semantic references to the palace of the Byzantine emperors on the Bosphorus, are so close and so numerous that the royal residence in Ravenna has been considered almost a microcosm of the latter by some scholars.[92] In any case in the great dining room of what Theodoric intended to be a copy of the imperial palace there was a pavement mosaic decorated with a central mythological subject: Bellerophon and the Chimera. Around it were personifications of the four seasons and *Xenia* scenes, as we can deduce from an inscription that invited the guests to help themselves to the fruits of all seasons and from all points of the compass, which were presumably also depicted on the pavement.[93] The example of the *Xenia* scenes in the reception hall of the palace in Ravenna, apart from providing a strong argument for the likelihood of there being a similar iconographic programme in Constantinople, also reveals the symbolism of such a composition in the room where the emperor received official guests. It was an expression of the plethora and global nature of the good things under his authority.[94]

Although, based on the foregoing, it seems highly likely that a similar mosaic could have been created in an imperial triclinium in Constantinople in the Early Byzantine period, it is not necessarily the case that it would have survived into Manasses' day and that the rhetor could have seen the work with his own eyes.

Yet the most important argument in favour of the idea that Manasses was describing something that he had most probably seen for himself is to be

---

91 M.J. Johnson, Toward a history of Theodoric's building program. *DOP* 42 (1988) 73 – 96. D. Mauskopf Deliyannis, Ravenna in late Antiquity. Cambridge 2010, 106 – 119, esp. 114 – 119 on Theodoric's building program in Ravenna.

92 Johnson, Toward a history (as footnote 91 above) 82 – 86, 96. Mauskopf Deliyannis, Ravenna (as footnote 91 above) 119 – 121.

93 Johnson, Toward a history (as footnote 91 above) 84. On this mosaic, see F. Berti, Mosaici Antichi in Italia, Ravenna: I. Rome 1967, 77 – 81, no. 60, Pls. XLVIII–LI. On the interpretation of the missing scenes as a *Xenia* composition, see H. Stern, Remarques sur les sujets figurés des mosaiques du palais dit de Théodoric à Ravenne. *Felix Ravenna* 116 (1978) 44 – 55 ; J.-P. Darmon, En guise de conclusion: propositions pour un sémantique des *xenia*, in: Xenia (as footnote 69 above) 108 – 9.

94 Johnson, Toward a history (as footnote 91 above) 84 – 85. Darmon, En guise (as footnote 93 above).

found in some of the topicalities of his day and more specifically in the interest that Manuel Komnenos showed in the old imperial palace in the capital. According to the sources, by the twelfth century the Great Palace was in a state of disrepair and it certainly would not have been the emperor's official residence at that time. Nevertheless Manuel refurbished various buildings in the complex and received official foreign delegates in the rooms. He tried to bring the former imperial palace back to life and in this context it does seem highly likely that Manasses is describing something that actually was within its walls.[95] The "topicality" acquired by the Great Palace explains Manasses' assertion that he was wandering through it; he is being an "antiquarian" and wants to trumpet it, as this was a subject that probably interested his reading/listening public.

To sum up, Manasses' dialogue with the earlier tradition of the literary genre of the *ekphrasis* and his readership's "horizon of expectations", together with the special topicality and the importance the Great Palace had acquired in the period ultimately allow us to suppose that the author is describing a composition involving *Xenia* scenes with unswept floor motifs. And that it was one that had been preserved in the ancient seat of the emperor in Constantinople up to the twelfth century.

VI. Manasses: rhetor or proto-art critic?

In conclusion I offer two final observations which, when put together, could open up another avenue of approach to – and perhaps formulate a more comprehensive working hypothesis on – *ekphraseis* that describe works of the visual arts. First of all, like any text, the *ekphrasis* under examination reveals something of its author to us. And he comes across here exactly as Paul Magdalino has described him, i. e. as identifying with the Comnenian elite and at the same time, while not denying the superiority of his own discourse, attributing the same magnetism to the craftsman who created the mosaic, a feature of the bourgeois tradition of which he was part. The low-key snobbery in his attitude becomes more strident at times in some brief asides in his oration, such as, for example, when he mentions incidentally what he was doing wandering through the palace and his ability to recognize and be completely enchanted by a

95 P. Magdalino, Manuel Komnenos and the Great Palace. *BMGS* 4 (1978) 104 – 111. Magdalino, Manuel (as footnote 35 above) 117 – 119.

work of high art. As Catia GALATARIOTOU has shown, he appears here as a supercilious intellectual.[96]

And yet on the other hand, the emphasis he puts – and which from time to time contemporary scholars have put – on this aspect of his personality,[97] tends to obscure a whole range of other qualities he has, e.g. his aesthetic sensitivity in describing not only the subject but also other aspects of the work, such as its technique, its colour palette and the intentions of the artist, which afford us a glimpse of his desire to come across as a connoisseur of art. [98]

Moreover, if you "dust off" the inflated language from the text and look directly at its structure and the way in which the description has been organized, it is impossible not to see that it follows the basic principles and methods of modern academic art history. To be specific Manasses arranges his description in the following sections: Materials – Colours – Composition – Iconography – Interpretation – General Commentary and Evaluation of the Work. It goes without saying that these are the basic parameters used in studying and interpreting works of art, as taught in any university handbook of our own day. It is also interesting to note that at the points at which he introduces each theme, he is so precise and economical with words that I would say his text is distinguished by the sort of clarity and precision that might be found in a scholarly analysis. A typical example is the attention he pays to describing the materials and the colour palette, i.e. the tiny purple, yellow, green and blue tesserae. Similarly the detailed description of the composition (i.e. circular in shape with a central medallion and divided up into however many sections by narrow black lines in which specific subjects are depicted) is given with the same simplicity and clarity, and even the terminology appropriate to an art historical analysis of a particular work.

Of course, this clear structure is lost in the overblown literary style Manasses uses in describing the iconographic subjects, a rookie error that every budding art historian learns to avoid!

---

96 MAGDALINO, Byzantine courtier (as footnote 30 above); GALATARIOTOU, Travel (as footnote 36 above).

97 And see NILSSON, Odysseus and the cyclops (as footnote 34 above).

98 I think the interpretation GODHILL put on the ekphrastic Hellenistic epigrams can well be applied to Manasses and his ekphrasis, i.e. that they correspond to the clever public comment a viewer feels obliged to make in front of a work of art: "In short, ekphrasis is designed to *produce a viewing subject*. We read to become lookers, and poems are written to educate and direct viewing as a social and intellectual process. When today the modern gallery visitor looks at a painting, and feels the need to make an intelligent, precise, witty, public remark to a friend, this visitor is – however belatedly or unconsciously – an heir of the Hellenistic *Sophos* and his epigrams": GODHILL, What is ekphrasis for? (as footnote 54 above) 2.

Moreover there is little doubt that his insistence on the εὐτεχνία of the artist, i.e. his artistic skill and inspiration, goes back for the most part to literary *topoi* (or commonplaces) from earlier ekphraseis. Once again the examples from Philostratos's *Imagines*, in which the descriptions of paintings are embellished with comments on the artistic flair and technique of their creator, confirm this opinion.[99] Nevertheless, Manasses' final judgement on the mosaicist of the pavement in the Great Palace, i.e. that he was to be praised for choosing to show the Earth holding ears of corn and thus to hint at the most important fruits she gave mankind, seems to be a comment on and an interpretation of this *specific* image and not a generalizing commonplace.[100]

This same author uses a similar structure in his ekphrasis on a work depicting Polyphemus and Odysseus.[101] This text has not been fully published, but on the basis of the part that is widely available, it seems that once again, having referred to the circumstances in which he had "seen" the work, he goes on to mention the materials and then the "technique" of carving. Indeed at this point he observes that the craftsman had used the different tints in the "stone" to depict different subjects, a particularly discerning remark that has allowed modern scholars to identify the work as an ancient cameo.[102] He goes on to identify the scene depicted and note the basic parts of the composition, a necessary prerequisite to proceeding with a detailed description of the individual iconographic motifs. In the rest of the text that has come down to us he describes

---

99 Philostratos, *Imagines* (as footnote 2 above) 90 (ἡδὺ τὸ σόφισμα τοῦ ζωγράφου), 116.

100 It is true that that there is a connection between this comment by Manasses and the description of Earth in the *ekphrasis* of the so-called Tabula Mundi by John of Gaza (6th c.). In this text the 6th-century rhetor describes a naked figure of *Ge*, lying on a couch with a mane of locks made up of ears of corn, bringing forth the fruits of the Earth (*karpoi*), a motif that is interpreted as an allegory of the eternal renewal of nature, see T. Rina, Johannes of Gaza's Tabula Mundi revisited, in K. Kogman-Appel / M. Meyer (eds.), Between Judaism and Christianity. Art historical essays in honor of Elisheva (Elisabeth) Revel-Neher. Leiden 2009, 118. See also D. Lauritzen, *Exegi monumentum*. L'*ekphrasis* autonome de Jean de Gaza, in Vavřínek/Odorico/Drbal, Ekphrasis (as footnote 6 above) 61–79, esp. 65–66. However, in point of fact Manasses seems rather to be using the early ekphrasis as a source to back up his own personal interpretation of the mosaic he is describing. In other words, if he were a modern scholar, a modern art historian, he could insert a footnote at this point to refer back to John of Gaza's text with the explanatory comment "For a similar interpretation of the iconography of Earth, see John the Grammatikos of Gaza, Ekphrasis on the Tabula Mundi 2.7–32".

101 L. Sternbach, Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte. *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts* 5 (1902) 73–86.

102 On the interpretation of the carving as a cameo, see Nilsson, Odysseus and the cyclops (as footnote 34 above) 131–2

the Cyclops in his familiar overblown style, once again using quotations from Homer and "images" from Philostratos's *Imagines*.[103]

From the foregoing observations the question ultimately arises: was this structure an original conceit on the part of Manasses or was it simply the result of the requirements of the *ekphrasis* "genre"?

Ruth Webb's studies on the *ekphraseis* of buildings incline us to the latter view. And more specifically the fact that those texts – despite their apparent diversity – are characterized by common morphological characteristics that, as Webb has shown, are due to the fact that their authors are following "conventions" that have their roots in the theoretical texts of the *Progymnasmata* and the later Byzantine commentaries on them.[104] Moreover the descriptions of buildings have a consistent structure: they are organized like a λόγος περιηγηματικὸς, i.e. in the form of a tour around the site, starting from the outside and continuing on the interior of the building being described, or they develop in narrative fashion according to how the buildings were constructed, describing the course of their creation in order to praise the person behind their conception.[105]

There is no detailed discussion of the description of works of art, e.g. sculpture or paintings, in Late Antique rhetoric handbooks. The sporadic manner in which this subject is discussed in these works, gives us little information about the existence of rules designed to control the form and structure of such texts.[106] However, the "school" texts that have come down to us are a very small part of the corresponding theoretical work produced and, of course, as in any "applied science", rhetoric did not remain the same throughout the long course of its deployment in the Byzantine world. Consequently, it would be possible to posit that there were some theoretical rules on ekphraseis of works of art such as paintings and sculptures, that are now lost. And it may

103 See Appendix, texts nos. 7 – 8.

104 Webb, Buildings (as footnote 6 above) 20 – 32.

105 Webb, Aesthetics (as footnote 13 above); Macrides/Magdalino, Architecture (as footnote 12 above); Webb, Imagination (as footnote 3 above) 175 – 176.

106 The only instance of this, in the very last text in the series of *progymnasmata*, by Nikolaos (5th c. CE), focuses on the need for the rhetor to attempt to explain the emotional state of the figures depicted. This same teacher prioritizes what he considers the correct way to describe such works, going from the general to the specific (i.e. expounding on the figure from the head down to the other parts of the body), a structure followed in examples of *ekphraseis* on statues attributed to him, see J. Felten (ed.), Nikolaos, Progymnasmata. Leipzig 1913, 69, 11.4 – 11. On Nikolaos' instructions for composing an ekphrasis on statues and paintings, Webb, Imagination (as footnote 3 above) 82 – 84. Thus the "canons" of Nikolaos's *progymnasmata* do not help us to answer the question posed by the structure of Manasses' *ekphraseis*.

be to them that the similarity in structure I have identified in the two above-mentioned texts by Manasses is owed.

Yet on the other hand this sort of organization of a description of a work of art could be due to Manasses' creative mind; in other words it could be an innovation on the part of the twelfth-century author. The development of rhetoric and the stylistic innovations in literature in this period make this a very attractive hypothesis.[107] But what is even more likely is that this is a product of the twelfth century precisely because it presupposes the personal gaze and involvement of the author in the description of the work, something that is consistent with some more general changes identifiable in the culture of the period, that is the transition from the "impersonal" to the "personal", as KAZHDAN and EPSTEIN have pointed out in the past.[108]

Finally, the question that arises from the above observations is: Was Manasses a proto-art critic (a sort of "forerunner" of the profession) or were the *ekphraseis* on works of art a separate genre with fixed structural elements and was Manasses merely going through the motions?[109] To answer this question it will be necessary ultimately to study other *ekphraseis* on the visual arts from this point of view and that seems highly likely to open up new and interesting avenues for the exploration of these extraordinarily attractive and enigmatic texts.[110]

---

107 MULLETT, Rhetoric (as footnote 4 above); MAGDALINO, Manuel (as footnote 35 above) 532. It should also be noted that the literary production of the 12th c. is characterized by an innovative spirit, see AGAPITOS, Θέση (as footnote 42 above) 216; P.A. AGAPITOS, Grammar, genre and patronage in the twelfth century. A scientific paradigm and its implication. *JÖB* 64 (2014) 1–22.

108 A.P. KAZHDAN / A. WHARTON-EPSTEIN, Change in Byzantine culture in the elventh and twelfth centuries. Berkeley 1990.

109 On genre as a tool for analyzing Byzantine literature see M. MULLETT, The madness of genre. *DOP* 46 (1992) 236–237. It is interesting to note here J. ELSNER's view that art history since Vasari and especially in the ancient sources is ultimately an *ekphrasis*, "or more precisely an extended argument built on ekphrasis": Art history as Ekphrasis. *Art History* 33 (2010) 10–27.

110 This question could be approached using MULLETT's proposal for a synchronic and diachronic examination of genres, i.e. in the case of Manasses both through the tradition of the *ekphrasis* "genre" and in the context of the development of rhetoric in the 12th c.

Appendix

1. Manasses' description of the greedy mouse:

> Ἤσθετό ποθεν ἐκείνης τῆς ὀστώσεως μῦς λίχνον δὲ ἄρα τὸ ζῷον καὶ ταχέως τῆς τῶν γευστῶν ὀσμῆς ἀντιλαμβανόμενον ᾔσθετο δὴ τῆς ὀστώσεως καὶ αἰσθανόμενος ὀξέως ἐπέδραμε καὶ ἐπιδραμὼν τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ὑπερεφρόνησε καὶ παρῆλθεν ὡς ἄχρηστα καὶ ἀφῆκεν ὡς ἄβρωτα καὶ οὐδὲ βλέπειν προσεποιήσατο, ὅλος δὲ τοῦ κρανίου τῆς τρίγλης ἐγένετο καὶ τούτῳ φέρων ἐπέρριψεν ἑαυτόν. Ἀλλ' ὢ τῆς σοφίας! Ἔγραψεν αὐτὸν ὁ τεχνίτης καὶ λιχνευόμενον καὶ φοβούμενον. Ἅμα τὸ στόμα ὑπήνοιγε καὶ ἅμα ὑπότρομος ἀνεμπόδιζεν. Ἡ μὲν γαστὴρ ἤπειγε πρὸς τροφὴν τὸ δὲ δέος ὑπέτρεπεν εἰς φυγὴν τὸ μὲν ὀρεκτικὸν ἀνηρέθιζεν, ἀλλ' ἀντεπεῖχεν τὸ δειλοκάρδιον ἅμα ἐπέτρεχε καὶ ἀπέτρεχε καὶ ὡς ἐδώδιμον ἤθελε καὶ ὡς πολέμιον ἔφευγε δείλαιος καὶ τὴν σωρεία αὐτῶν τῶν ὀστέων ὑπώπτευε, μή πού τις ἐν αὐτοῖς κατοικίδιος αἴλουρος παρακρύπτοιτο (Agapetos/Hinterberger, as footnote 1 above, 64–66).
>
> A mouse had smelled the heap, for the animal is indeed greedy and quickly grasps the smell of food. It had thus smelled the heap and attacked. In its rush it ignored everything that was there, passed it by without even looking at it, considering it to be useless and tasteless. It had desired the head of the red mullet and attacked it with frenzy. What clever invention though! The artist had painted it as both greedy and frightened. It opened its mouth and, at the same time, moved back scared. Its belly pressed it upon food, but fear put it to flight. Its appetites urged it forward, but cowardice held it back. It advanced and retreated. It wanted the red mullet as a titbit, but avoided it as enemy, looking at the heap distrustfully, should the cat of the house have hidden inside it. With such an expertise had the painter represented the mouse in its dilemma. (Translation: I. Nilsson, Narrating images, as footnote 34 above, 126).

2. Description of a mouse in "The (grammatical) sketches of a mouse" (*Τὰ Σχέδη τοῦ Μυός*):

> … ἦν ἐκεῖσε καὶ τρίγλης ἀγλαομόρφου κρανίον καὶ τούτῳ φέρων ὁ μῦς ἐπέρριψεν ἑαυτόν. καὶ ἦν ὁμοῦ λιχνευόμενος καὶ φοβούμενος· ἅμα τὸ στόμα ὑπήνοιγε καὶ ἅμα ὑπότρομος ἀνεπόδιζεν. ἡ μὲν γαστὴρ ἤπειγεν εἰς τροφήν, τὸ δὲ δέος ἔτρεπεν εἰς φυγήν· τὸ μὲν ὀρεκτικὸν ἀνηρέθιζεν, ἀλλ' ἀντεπεῖχε τὸ δειλοκάρδιον· ἅμα ἐπέτρεχε καὶ ἅμα ἀπέτρεχε· καὶ ὡς ἐδώδιμον ἤθελε καὶ ὡς πολέμιον ἔφευγεν. ὑπώπτευε γάρ, μή πού τις κατοικίδιος αἰλουρὶς τοῖς ὀστέοις ἐμπερικρύπτοιτο. ὅμως δὲ τὸ δέος ὀψέ ποτε ἀποτιναξάμενος τῷ κρανίῳ τῆς τρίγλης ἐνέπιπτε (Papademetriou, as footnote 82 above).
>
> There was also a head of a beautiful mullet, and the mouse hurriedly threw himself at it. Yet even as he desired (it), he was afraid: he opened his mouth and, shaking, stepped back. While his stomach pushed him towards the food, fear put him to flight. Desire stirred in him, but his cowardly heart held him back. Even as he was running toward it, he was running away from it. He desired food but fled as if from an enemy (Translation P. Marciniak, A pious mouse, as note 83 above, 524).

3. The figs and a small bird by Philostratos:

> Σῦκα μέλανα ὀπῷ λειβόμενα σεσώρευται μὲν ἐπὶ φύλλων ἀμπέλου, γέγραπται δὲ μετὰ τῶν τοῦ φλοιοῦ ῥηγμάτων, καὶ τὰ μὲν ὑποκέχηνε παραπτύοντα τοῦ μέλιτος, τὰ δ' ὑπὸ τῆς ὥρας οἷον ἔσχισται. πλησίον δὲ αὐτῶν ὄζος ἔρριπται… τὸ δὲ ἐπ' ἄκρῳ τοῦ ὄζου στρουθὸς διορώρυχεν, ἃ δὴ καὶ ἥδιστα σύκων δοκεῖ. (Philostratos *Imagines*, as footnote 2 above, 204).
>
> Purple figs dripping with juice are heaped on vine-leaves; and they are depicted with breaks in the skin, some just cracking open to disgorge their honey, some split apart, they are so ripe. Near them lies a branch … while on the tip of the branch a sparrow buries its bill in what seems the very sweetest of the figs. (Translation FAIRBANKS, as footnote 84 above).

4. Figs and a small bird by Manasses:

> Τὰ γὰρ δέρματα ῥυτιδούμενα τοῦτο ἐμήνυον καὶ τὰ σῦκα ὑπέχαινε καὶ τοῦ συγκράτου ἀπέβλυζε μέλιτος. Ὑπέτρεχε δὲ τὰ σῦκα στρουθάριον καὶ ἤθελεν ὀπωρίζεσθαι καὶ ἐπτερύγιζε πανταχοῦ καὶ περιστρούθιζε καὶ ἐῴκει τοῦ χυμοῦ τῶν σύκων κατάκρως ἡττῆσθαι καὶ οὐδ' ἂν εὐκόλως αὐτῶν ἀποπτύσσεσθαι. (AGAPETOS/HINTERBERGER, as footnote 1 above, 72).
>
> Their skin had become wrinkled and the figs had split open, letting their thick honey ooze out. And a little sparrow was creeping up on them, fluttering all around and chirping and it seemed to be utterly defeated by the juice of the figs since it was not easy to fly away.

5. The smell of apples by Philostratos:

> Μῶν ἐπῄσθου τι τῆς ἀνὰ τὸν κῆπον εὐωδίας ἢ βραδύνει σοι τοῦτο; ἀλλὰ προθύμως ἄκουε, προσβαλεῖ γάρ σε μετὰ τοῦ λόγου καὶ τὰ μῆλα (Philostratos Imagines, as footnote 2 above, 96).
>
> Do you catch aught of the fragrance hovering over the garden, or are your senses dull? But listen carefully; for along with my description of the garden the fragrance of the apples also will come to you (translation FAIRBANKS, as footnote 84 above).

6. Manasses description of the fragrant apples:

> Καλὰ τὰ μῆλα, ἐξέρυθρα, δροσερὰ καὶ ἐῴκεσαν εἶναι νεοδρεπῆ, ἀρτιτρύγητα καὶ περισῴζειν ἔτι τὸ χρόασμα, εἶπεν ἂν τις ὡς μετὰ τῆς εὐωδίας γεγράφατο. (AGAPETOS/HINTERBERGER, as footnote 1 above, 60).
>
> The apples were lovely, very rosy, moist and seemed to be freshly picked, still keeping their colour, as if they'd been depicted with their fragrance (intact).

7. The description of Polyphemus in the *Imagines* of Philostratos:

Ἔτι δὲ ὄρειός τε καὶ δεινὸς γέγραπται χαίτην μὲν ἀνασείων ὀρθὴν καὶ ἀμφιλαφῆ πίτυος δίκην, καρχάρους δὲ ὑποφαίνων ὀδόντας ἐκ βοροῦ τοῦ γενείου, στέρνα τε καὶ γαστέρα καὶ τὸ ἐς ὄνυχας ἧκον λάσιος πάντα (Philostratos *Imagines*, as footnote 2 above, 96).

He is painted a creature of the mountains, fearful to look at, tossing his hair, which stands erect and is as dense as the foliage of a pine tree, showing a set of jagged teeth in his voracious jaw, shaggy all over – breast and belly and limbs even to the nails (Translation Fairbanks, as footnote 84 above).

8. Manasses' description of Polyphemos:

Γέγραπτο δέ ὁ Κύκλωψ εὐτροφὸς τις καὶ ἄγριος … τὸ σῶμα πελώριος, ἰδεῖν φοβερὸς εἰς θῆρα μᾶλλον καὶ ὅρος κατάφυτον … δασὺς τὴν κόμην, πολὺς τὰς γνάθους, δεινὸς τὰς ὀφρῦς (Sternbach, Beiträge, as footnote 101 above, 84).

The Cyclops was depicted well fed and wild …with a huge body, frightful to see, looking more like a beast and a wooded mountain … with shaggy hair … big jaws and thick eyebrows.

 DOI 10.1515/bz-2018-0005 — BZ 2018; 111(1): 103–134

Andrei Gandila

Reconciling the 'step sisters': early Byzantine numismatics, history and archaeology

Abstract: Despite the growing body of excavation finds and the steady publication of museum collections, the numismatic evidence remains an underutilized historical source. Historians who study Late Antiquity rely on archaeological evidence but tend to ignore coin finds, partly because numismatics developed as an independent field with its own set of specialized tools and research questions. Insufficient dialogue between the disciplines has delayed a proper appreciation of Early Byzantine coins as historical source and the development of a clear methodology for their use in conjunction with the literary and archaeological evidence. In order to overcome such disciplinary divides, this paper proposes several research directions by highlighting the main benefits of integrating the numismatic evidence more fully into the historical narrative. These research directions include a greater emphasis on bronze coinage, the study of the long-distance circulation of people and goods, and distinctions between urban, rural, and fortified contexts. This methodological discussion is followed by a case study from Byzantium's Lower Danube frontier.

Adresse: Prof. Dr. Andrei Gandila, University of Alabama in Huntsville, 301 Sparkman Drive, Roberts Hall, Room 402, Huntsville, AL 35899, USA; andrei.gandila@uah.edu

I. Introduction: an invitation to dialogue

The integration of numismatic evidence into the historical study of Late Antiquity is a more recent development and has been done only sporadically. This is all the more unsettling as the wealth of numismatic material brought to light by ar-

I would like to thank Florin Curta, Cécile Morrisson, and Alan Stahl for reading an early draft; Ioan Opriș for providing illustration for my case study (fig. 1 – 2); the two anonymous readers who made several useful observations and suggestions; and the audience of the session organized at Kalamazoo by the FLAME Project (Framing the Late Antique and Early Medieval Economy) for an interesting discussion.

chaeological excavations conducted in various parts of the Mediterranean world has greatly enriched the existing corpus of Early Byzantine coins. Although there are still many unexplored areas and much unpublished material, historians should not ignore the numismatic evidence as an indication of how the Empire functioned in Late Antiquity and as a source of information about cultural interaction with populations and polities beyond its frontiers. And yet, even historians who rely on material culture in their work still feel uncomfortable using coin finds and fitting them into the larger picture.[1] Regrettably, although coins, unlike any other artifact, can help answer a broad range of questions about economy, politics, ideology, diplomacy, religion, and cultural diffusion, they rarely receive the attention they deserve.[2] The main purpose of this essay is to bring into focus excavation coins and re-emphasize some specific contributions that coins have to offer, from a methodological perspective and with the help of a concrete case study from Early Byzantium's Balkan frontier.[3] The desideratum itself is

---

1 Many influential 21st-century studies dealing with the social and economic conditions of the Early Byzantine Mediterranean world do not address the problem of coin circulation as one of the main indicators of exchange; e. g. A. Kingsley / M. Decker (eds.), Economy and exchange in the East Mediterranean during Late Antiquity. Oxford 2001; C. Wickham, Framing the early middle ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400 – 800. Oxford 2005; A. Cameron, The Mediterranean world in Late Antiquity: AD 395 – 700, 2nd ed. London 2012, esp. Ch. 4; S. T. Loseby, The Mediterranean economy, in P. Fouracre (ed.), The new Cambridge medieval history I, c. 500 – c. 700. Cambridge 2005, 605 – 638; B. Ward-Perkins, Specialized production and exchange, in A. Cameron / B. Ward-Perkins / M. Whitby (eds.), The Cambridge ancient history. Volume XIV: Late Antiquity: empire and successors, A.D. 425 – 600. Cambridge 2001, 346 – 391; L. Lavan (ed.), Local economies? Production and exchange of inland regions in Late Antiquity. Leiden 2013.
2 Wickham recognized the potential usefulness of coins as source material, but was uncertain as to how it may be employed effectively; see Wickham, Framing (as footnote 1 above), 702, note 16. Horden and Purcell were less optimistic, describing numismatic sources as "ambiguous" and of "occasional use" only, for which see P. Horden / N. Purcell, The corrupting sea: a study in Mediterranean history. Oxford 2000, 160. Finally, Alyssa Bandow argued that numismatics holds an "ambiguous place" in the study of the late antique economy, because "coins are not found with enough regularity to be a reliable source of statistical information," a rather surprising claim, for which see A. A. Bandow, The late antique economy: approaches, methods and conceptual issues, in Lavan, Local economies? (as footnote 1 above), 26. As a striking contrast with the opinion of scholars working on Late Antiquity, Bowman and Wilson found the Roman monetary system "fundamental" to the study of commercial institutions, trade, and markets, for which see A. K. Bowman / A. Wilson, Quantifying the Roman economy: integration, growth, decline?, in A. K. Bowman / A. Wilson (eds.), Quantifying the Roman economy: methods and problems. Oxford 2009, 22.
3 In this paper "Early Byzantine" is used in the numismatic sense and refers to the sixth and seventh centuries; from the perspective of historians and archaeologists, depending on region and scholarly tradition, this phase can cover several centuries from Constantine to the Arab con-

not new; numismatists have long argued that the evidence they study should be granted a more prominent place in the historical inquiry and significant work has been done complementing the traditional numismatic analysis with information drawn from archaeological and literary sources.[4] However, a more systematic plan of action is needed at this point in order to propel the interdisciplinary discussion to the next stage of cooperation and help bridge the inherent disciplinary divides.

Indeed, coins are one of the most undervalued, underutilized, and poorly understood primary sources. In a sense, they are brushed aside by historians and even archaeologists, who use them chiefly for dating purposes, precisely because of their richness and the somewhat justified claim that coins require a separate specialization. Moreover, one feels that observations made on the basis of archaeological material in general, and excavation coins in particular, are permanently subject to change and therefore unreliable especially since very few sites have been fully excavated. For many scholars it is still unclear what type of economic functions were performed by coins and how exactly they can assist economic historians in mapping regional, inter-regional, and even international trade.[5] How can we compare the coin finds from a church in Istanbul with the ones found in the shops of Sardis or the baths of Hammat Gader? These are some of the reasons why scholars who do engage with Byzantine money usually do so indirectly by culling this type of historical information from written accounts and contemporary papyri, rather than referring to the body of numismatic material from excavations, hoards, and museum collections.

---

quest; while the present discussion is primarily engaging with scholarship focusing on the sixth and seventh centuries, its driving principles apply to Late Antiquity as a whole.

4 Most of these initiatives have come from a numismatist's perspective; see, however, more recently L. Zavagno, Cyprus between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (ca. 600 – 800): an island in transition. New York 2017; A. Sarantis, Justinian's Balkan wars: campaigning, diplomacy and development in Illyricum, Thrace, and the Northern World A.D. 527 – 65. Prenton 2016; M. Wołoszyn (ed.), Byzantine coins in Central Europe between the 5th and 10th century. Cracow 2009; F. Curta, Byzantium in Dark-Age Greece (the numismatic evidence in its Balkan context). *BMGS* 29 (2005) 113 – 146; A. Madgearu, The end of town-life in Scythia Minor. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 20 (2001) 207 – 217. From the list of Eastern European publications, where this approach is more common, see most recently O. Damian, Bizanțul la Dunărea de Jos (secolele VII–X). Brăila 2015, esp. Ch. 4.7; C. Chiriac, Civilizația bizantină și societatea din regiunile extracarpatice ale României în secolele VI–VIII. Brăila 2013, esp. Ch. 4.

5 See, for instance, M. Mundell Mango, Byzantine trade: local, regional, interregional and international, in M. Mundell Mango (ed.), Byzantine trade, 4th–12th centuries: the archaeology of local, regional and international exchange: papers of the Thirty-eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St John's College, University of Oxford, March 2004. Burlington 2009, 5.

The insufficient dialogue between numismatists, historians, and archaeologists has deep and convoluted roots, not always easy to disentangle by the modern researcher. The nature of the problem is best reflected in Michael Hendy's cynical yet sobering remarks on the subject:

> In any case, the effect of these several tendencies and divisions – current tendencies in the study of numismatics, inherited divisions in the study of history, and a general division between numismatists and historians – has been little short of disastrous for the study of the Byzantine monetary economy as a whole.[6]

The problem had less to do with the available numismatic evidence and more with a certain direction of research, primarily the tendency to overemphasize the role of money as a tool of the Byzantine state and the decision to adopt a "primitivist" stance in the study of ancient economic systems.[7] Insufficient room was left for exploring the significance of excavation coins despite the early appeal of Alfred Bellinger who argued that low-value coins "reflect the life of the common people, which is generally too vulgar to have been noticed in the formal histories."[8] By the time when Jones published his magisterial *Later Roman Empire* there was already enough information to rely on in order to integrate the numismatic evidence into an economic survey of Late Antiquity. Yet Jones had little interest in archaeology, which he famously ignored in his work.[9] Consequently, his discussion of monetary issues was restricted to comments about salaries, prices, and the standard of living as they transpired from literary sources, as well as remarks about the exchange rate between copper and gold and its economic implications.[10] With few exceptions, for several

---

6 M. Hendy, Studies in the Byzantine monetary economy c. 300 – 1450. Cambridge 1985, 11.
7 For a useful overview, see recently J.-M. Carrié, Were late Roman and Byzantine economies market economies? A comparative look at historiography, in C. Morrisson (ed.), Trade and markets in Byzantium. Washington, DC 2012, 13 – 26.
8 A. R. Bellinger, Catalogue of the coins found at Corinth, 1925. New Haven, CT 1930, vii.
9 A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire 284 – 602. A social, economic and administrative survey. Oxford 1964. Equally influential was M.I. Finley, The ancient economy. London 1973. By this time bibliographies of numismatic literature gathered hundreds of works published after the Second World War, for which see P. Grierson, Byzantine numismatics, in K. Skaare / G.C. Miles (eds.), A survey of numismatic research 1960 – 1965. II. Medieval and Oriental numismatics. Copenhagen 1967, 52 – 62; M. Restle, Forschungen zur byzantinischen Numismatik, 1950 – 1960. *BNGJ* 19 (1966) 225 – 259; J. L. Malter, Byzantine numismatic bibliography, 1950 – 1965. Chicago 1968.
10 Jones, The Later Roman Empire (as footnote 9 above), 435 – 448. Interestingly, as a young scholar Jones had an interest in coinage and published the coin finds resulted from the excavations conducted in the hippodrome of Constantinople in the 1920s: A. H. M. Jones, The Coins, in

decades English-language scholarship would subscribe to this approach,[11] even though, on one hand, the increasing number of finds from excavations begged for closer scrutiny, while on the other, numismatists advocated the value of coins as source material.[12]

The number of excavation reports itself has multiplied in the last decades. Almost every archaeological monograph includes a separate chapter on coins, while for larger sites coin finds required book-length studies.[13] Well-published

---

S. Casson / D. Talbot Rice / G. F. Hudson / A. H. M. Jones, Preliminary report upon the excavations carried out in the hippodrome of Constantinople in 1927. London 1928, 46 – 50. He further encouraged the use of numismatic evidence arguing that “by the classification of coins they [numismatists] have made a substantial contribution to history, especially in the area and periods where the literary evidence is scanty or untrustworthy.” See A. H. M. Jones, Numismatics and history, in R. A. G. Carson / C. H.V. Sutherland (eds.), Essays in Roman coinage presented to Harold Mattingly. Oxford 1956, 13.

11 On the continent, under the influence of the *Annales* School, French scholarship upheld the view that a larger emphasis was needed on social and economic history and the life of the common people by using a variety of sources; Évelyne Patlagean’s monograph is a fine example of the ways in which the numismatic evidence may be included in a narrative about social life in Early Byzantium; see É. Patlagean, Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance, 4e–7e siècles. Paris 1977.

12 For early observations, see P. Grierson, Byzantine coinage as source material, in J. M. Hussey / D. Obolensky / S. Runciman (eds.), Proceedings of the XIII International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, 5 – 10 September 1966. London 1967, 317 – 333. For important early site publications, see D. Waage, Antioch-on-the-Orontes, vol. IV, part 2: Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Crusaders’ coins. Princeton 1952; M. Thompson, The Athenian Agora 2. Coins from the Roman through the Venetian period. Princeton 1954; G. E. Bates, Byzantine coins. Cambridge, MA 1971; see also the pre-war monographs with significant lists of Byzantine coins: A. R. Bellinger, Catalogue of the coins (as footnote 8 above); K. M. Edwards, Corinth VI: coins, 1896 – 1929. Cambridge, MA 1933; A. R. Bellinger, Coins from Jerash, 1928 – 1934. New York 1938. For Byzantine hoards, see S. McA. Mosser, A bibliography of Byzantine coin hoards. New York 1935.

13 The literature is vast; several monographs published in the last two decades should be mentioned for their large samples of Early Byzantine coins: T. Marot, Las monedas del Macellum de Gerasa (Yaras, Jordania): aproximación a la circulación monetaria en la provincia de Arabia. Madrid 1998; K. Sheedy / R. Carson / A. Walmsley, Pella in Jordan, 1979 – 1990: The coins. Sydney 2001; J. DeRose Evans, The joint expedition to Caesarea Maritima. Excavation reports. Volume VI: The coins and the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine economy of Palestine. Boston 2006; K. Butcher, Archaeology of the Beirut souks 1. Small change in ancient Beirut: the coin finds from BEY 006 and BEY 045: Iron Age, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods. Beirut 2003; A. Travaglini / V. G. Camilleri, Hierapolis di Frigia: le monete. Campagne di scavo 1957 – 2004. Istanbul 2010; O. Callot, Salamine de Chypre. XVI. Les monnaies. Fouilles de la ville 1964 – 1974. Paris 2004; J. D. Mac Isaac / R. Knapp, Excavations at Nemea III. The coins. Los Angeles 2005; S. Torbatov, Монетната циркулация в градището край Одърци. Tărnovo 2002; H.-C. Noeske, Münzfunde aus Ägypten I. Die Münzfunde des ägyptischen Pilgerzentrums

catalogues of local museum collections can supply additional material for regional studies and statistical analyses, although the provenance is not always secure.[14] This wealth of raw data can be disconcerting for historians interested in including coin finds in their research, despite the growing body of synthetic studies.[15] The quest to make the numismatic evidence more relevant to the historical narrative is in fact a two-part dossier addressing two different audiences, numismatists and historians, respectively, and occasionally archaeologists. The first side of the problem deals with the research questions developed by numismatists, which need to be more historically-oriented. Numismatists must reach out more often and meet their historian and archaeologist colleagues halfway by combining the traditional preoccupations of the discipline with broader historical inquiries.[16] Adapting and standardizing the methods of publishing and

---

Abu Mina und die Vergleichsfunde aus den Diocesen Aegyptus und Oriens vom 4.–8. Jh. n. Chr. Berlin 2000; O. Picard / C. Bresc / T. Faucher / G. Gorre / M.-C. Marcellesi / C. Morrisson, Les monnaies des fouilles du Centre d'Études Alexandrines. Alexandria 2012.

14 The list of recent museum catalogues is too long to be cited in full; for recent publications focusing on Byzantine coinage or including a large number of coins, see especially S. Ignatova / S. Filipova / A. Tenchova / I. Prokopov, Numismatic collection of the Historical Museum in Pazardzhik (coins from the 4th century BC to the 7th century AD). Sofia 2015; Z. Demirel Gökalp, Malatya Arkeoloji Müzesi bizans sikkeleri kataloğu. Istanbul 2014; C. Ünal, İzmir ili ve ilçeleri (Bergama, Efes, Ödemiş müzeleri) örnekleri ile I. dönem Bizans sikkeleri, 5. yüzyıl sonu – 8. yüzyıl ortası. Manisa 2012; C. Ünal, Manisa Müzesi Bizans sikkeleri. Manisa 2012; J. Casey, A catalogue of the Greek, Roman and Byzantine coins in Sinop Museum (Turkey) and related historical and numismatic studies. London 2010; Z. Demirel Gökalp, Yalvaç Müzesi bizans sikkeleri. Ankara 2009; S. Ireland, Greek, Roman and Byzantine coins in the museum at Amasya. London 2000; G. Poenaru Bordea / R. Ocheşeanu / A. Popeea, Monnaies byzantines du Musée de Constanţa (Roumanie). Wetteren 2004; E. Theoklieva-Stoycheva, Medieval coins from Mesemvria. Sofia 2001.

15 For individual regions of the Byzantine world, see C. Morrisson, La monnaie en Syrie byzantine, in J.-M. Dentzer / W. Orthmann (eds.), Archéologie et histoire de la Syrie II. La Syrie de l'époque achéménide a l'avènement de l'Islam. Saarbrücken 1989, 187 – 204; A. Walmsley, Coin frequencies in sixth and seventh century Palestine and Arabia: social and economic implications. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42 (1999) 326 – 350; C. Lightfoot, Byzantine Anatolia: reassessing the numismatic evidence. *Revue numismatique* 158 (2002) 229 – 239; C. Morrisson / V. Popović / V. Ivanišević (eds.), Les trésors monétaires byzantins des Balkans et d'Asie Mineure (491 – 713). Paris 2006; E. Arslan, La circolazione monetaria in Italia (secoli VI–VIII). Città e campagna, in A. Jacob / J. M. Martin / G. Noyé (eds.), Histoire et culture dans l'Italie byzantine. Rome 2006, 365 – 385. See also the next footnote.

16 A selective list of more recent contributions includes: C. Morrisson, "Regio dives in omnibus bonis ornata". African economy from the Vandals to the Arab conquest in the light of coin evidence, in S. Stevens / J. Conant (eds), North Africa under Byzantium and Early Islam. Washington, DC 2016, 173 – 198; A. Gandila, Going east: western money in the Early Byzantine Balkans, Asia Minor and the Circumpontic region (6th–7th c.). *Rivista italiana di numismatica* 117

presenting the evidence in order to make it less intimidating to the non-specialist is another improvement that would help other scholars gain easier access to numismatic material.[17] Unfortunately, few coin lists include detailed descriptions of archaeological contexts and even fewer are followed by a narrative placing site finds within the broader archaeological and historical framework of the region. Indeed, the archaeological context is particularly important as it can help historians understand whether a coin was deposited while it was still in circulation, whether the function of the complex and the association with other artifacts can reveal something about patterns of circulation, and finally, whether they are dealing with a typical case of casual loss or with an object discarded deliberately.[18] A full treatment of these numismatic issues is beyond the scope of this essay, but the point to be taken is that the process of creating bridges across disciplines requires that numismatic studies themselves become more "user-friendly." On the other hand, while these methodological problems can be a genuine source of frustration for the non-specialist, they cannot serve as an apology for scholarly unwillingness to come to terms with the complexity of numismatic evidence. This will be the focus of the next pages.

(2016) 129 – 188; P. Papadopoulou, Coins and pots: numismatic and ceramic evidence in the archaeology and economic history of the Middle Ages, in J. Vroom (ed.), Medieval and post-medieval ceramics in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turnhout 2015, 199 – 226; G. Bijovsky, Gold coin and small change: monetary circulation in fifth-seventh century Byzantine Palestine. Trieste 2013; F. Curta / A. Gandila, Hoards and hoarding patterns in the Early Byzantine Balkans. *DOP* 65 – 66 (2012) 45 – 111; D.M. Metcalf, Byzantine Cyprus, 491 – 1191. Nicosia 2009; C. Morrisson, La monnaie sur les routes fluviales et maritimes des échanges dans le monde méditerranéen (VIe–IXe siècle), in L'acqua nei secoli altomedievali. Spoleto 2008, 631 – 670; V. Prigent, Le rôle des provinces d'Occident dans l'approvisionnement de Constantinople (618 – 771). Témoignages numismatique et sigillographique. *MEFRM* 118 (2006) 269 – 299; H. Patterson / A. Rovelli, Ceramics and coins in the middle Tiber valley from the fifth to the tenth century AD, in H. Patterson (ed.), Bridging the Tiber: approaches to regional archaeology in the middle Tiber valley. London 2004, 269 – 284.

17 On this topic, more generally, see K. Lockyear, Where do we go from here? Recording and analysing Roman coins from archaeological excavations. *Britannia* 38 (2007) 211 – 224.

18 For an illuminating conceptual discussion, see Butcher, Archaeology (as footnote 13 above), 23 – 41.

II. Research directions and historical value of Early Byzantine coins

The suggestions proposed below are not absolute novelties to the numismatist, but will hopefully benefit historians who are looking to broaden their range of primary sources through the inclusion of numismatic material. They bring together bits and pieces always acknowledged by open-minded Byzantinists but never fully articulated. Three great assets of Early Byzantine coinage are standardization, chronological accuracy, and high frequency. Unlike the bewildering variety of artifacts ordered by archaeologists according to somewhat artificial typologies, coinage needs no such arrangements. Byzantine money has already been classified by the issuing authority into different denominations, mints, and dates. Sixth- and seventh-century bronze coins are official documents, in most cases dated with the regnal year of the ruling emperor which makes them more chronologically sensitive than any other artifact. Finally, the great quantity of Early Byzantine coins found in the Mediterranean world and beyond affords analyses that are statistically meaningful and comparisons that go beyond the regional level. What follows are some suggestions of areas where Byzantine coins can contribute toward a more nuanced understanding of some of the major research questions debated in current scholarship. This will be followed by a case study where these concepts can be tested more directly.

1. Emphasis on bronze coinage. The tendency to focus almost entirely on gold coinage has been the hallmark of previous research on topics like taxation, military salaries, and imperial largesse where the information provided by coinage could be supplemented with details drawn from written accounts.[19] However, such a focus leaves out many aspects of social life considering that only a small percentage of the population had the privilege of handling gold coins on a regular basis. Most daily transactions were done in small-value currency, one that has been largely neglected in historical scholarship. The question is addressed only obliquely in studies of salaries, prices, and inflation, which rely pri-

19 F. Carlà, L'oro nella tarda antichità: aspetti economici e sociali. Torino 2009; P. Sarris, Economy and society in the age of Justinian. Cambridge 2006; J. Banaji, Agrarian change in Late Antiquity: gold, labour, and aristocratic dominance. Oxford 2001; R. Delmaire, Largesses sacrées et res privata: l'aerarium impérial et son administration du IVe au VIe siècle. Rome 1989; Hendy, Studies in the Byzantine (as footnote 6 above); I. E. Karayannopoulos, Das Finanzwesen des frühbyzantinischen Staates. Munich 1958.

marily on Egyptian papyri rather than on actual coin finds.[20] Bronze coinage was the lifeblood of the Byzantine market economy and can help answer questions about the extent and limitation of monetary activity in a pre-modern economic system through the variety of contexts in which such coins are found. Furthermore, a focus on bronze coinage ensures a direct link between numismatics, archaeology, and history as the overwhelming majority of coins found on any Late Roman/Byzantine site are bronze. Finally, bronze coinage provides the widest range of denominations, issuing mints, as well as accurate dating and allows a type of multivariate analysis that cannot be achieved with the more monolithic and less abundant gold coinage.[21] Indeed, the next points build on this suggested change of focus.

2. Long-distance circulation of people and goods. Long-distance trade has been one of the most debated issues in the economic history of Late Antiquity, one that suffers from insufficient documentation beyond the level of ceramic assemblages and the occasional anecdote in contemporary accounts. The diffusion of Early Byzantine bronze coins in the Mediterranean world has much to offer, although the distinction between trade and non-economic circulation is not always clear cut. Coins cannot answer such questions by themselves but they can add a more compelling economic dimension to the presence of other goods, which would otherwise be difficult to explain. For example, Early Byzantine coins issued at Alexandria, Carthage, Rome, and Ravenna traveled east to the Balkans and the Black Sea region through a combination of trade, *annona*, and army movement.[22] The presence of Egyptian wine sellers at Tomis, attested by epigraphic evidence, as well as the finds of devotional flasks from Abu Mina nicely dovetail with the unusual concentration of Early Byzantine bronze coins from Alexandria found at Tomis and provides tantalizing evidence for the circulation of coins as part of the long-distance circulation of goods and people in the

---

20 Recent examples dealing with the sixth century include: SARRIS, Economy and society (as footnote 19 above); C. ZUCKERMAN, Du village à l'empire autour du registre fiscal d'Aphroditô (525/526). Paris 2004; L.S.B. MACCOULL, Taxpayers and their money in sixth-century Egypt: currency in the Temseu Skordon Codex. *Journal of Late Antiquity* 8 (2015) 97 – 113.

21 P. GUEST, The production, supply and use of Late Roman and early Byzantine copper coinage in the Eastern Empire. *NC* 172 (2012) 105 – 131; A. GANDILA, Early Byzantine coin circulation in the eastern provinces: a statistical approach. *American Journal of Numismatics* 21 (2009) 151 – 226.

22 GANDILA, Going east (as footnote 16 above), 129 – 188.

Mediterranean.[23] Likewise, the intense circulation of Alexandrian 12-*nummia* issues in Palestine, a region adhering to the Constantinopolitan system of denominations (based on the 40-*nummia*), as well as the local imitation of such anomalous coinage sheds more light on the strong economic contacts between Egypt and Palestine, otherwise known from different types of sources.[24] Their concentration in Jerusalem where hundreds of wine presses have been found and at Ashqelon where kilns for LR4 are attested – the container used for the transport of the famous Gaza wine exported across the Mediterranean – cannot be a coincidence.[25] Although insignificant compared to the value of gold *solidi*, bronze coins traveled long distances and the mint mark carefully inscribed on almost every coin can help map out their movement. Did coins travel along with other goods? Are coastal settlements more likely to produce "exotic" coin finds? Can such finds tell us anything about the circulation of people – traders, soldiers, pilgrims or even foreigners taking home Byzantine coins? Historians and archaeologists working on any of these topics will find their arguments enriched by such numismatic data.

3. Distinctions between urban, rural, and fortified contexts. The study of Byzantine cities, villages, and fortresses has intensified tremendously in the past few decades.[26] Undoubtedly, the goldmine of archaeological data made available

---

23 I. Barnea, Relațiile provinciei Scythia Minor cu Asia Mică, Siria și Egiptul. *Pontica* 5 (1972) 260 – 261; A. Madgearu, Militari "sciți" și "daci" în Egipt, Italia și Palestina în secolele VI–VII. *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche și arheologie* 65 (2014) 49 – 58.

24 Bijovsky, Gold coin (as footnote 16 above), 297 – 307; For trade between Egypt and Palestine, see D. Sperber, Objects of trade between Palestine and Egypt in Roman times. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 19 (1976) 113 – 147. On the Jewish community in Alexandria, see G. G. Stroumsa, Jewish survival in Late Antique Alexandria, in R. Bonfil / O. Irshai / G.G. Stroumsa / R. Talgam (eds.), Jews in Byzantium: dialectics of minority and majority cultures. Leiden 2012, 257 – 269.

25 S.A. Kingsley, The economic impact of the Palestinian wine trade in Late Antiquity, in Kingsley / Decker (eds.), Economy and exchange (as footnote 1 above), 44 – 68.

26 For recent contributions, see O. Dally / C. J. Ratté (eds.), Archaeology and the cities of Asia Minor in late antiquity. Ann Arbor, MI 2011; L. Zavagno, Cities in transition: urbanism in Byzantium. Oxford 2009; L. Lavan / W. Bowden, Recent research in late-antique urbanism. Portsmouth, RI 2001; T.S. Burns / J.W. Eadie, Urban centers and rural contexts in late antiquity. East Lansing, MI 2001; N. Christie, Landscapes of change: rural evolutions in late antiquity and the early middle ages. Aldershot 2004; J. Lefort / C. Morrisson / J.-P. Sodini (eds.), Les villages dans l'Empire byzantin (IVe–XVe siècle). Paris 2005; V. Dinchev, The fortresses of Thrace and Dacia in the Early Byzantine period, in A. G. Poulter (ed.), The transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and beyond. Oxford 2007, 479 – 546; M. Konrad, Roman military fortifications along the eastern frontier: settlement continuities and change in North Syria, 4th–8th centuries

through systematic excavations is responsible for the growing interest in these themes. On almost every site bronze coins constitute one of the largest assemblages, second only to pottery, but more reliable due to chronological accuracy and unquestionable origin, as long as the coins are still reasonably legible.[27] Patterns of coin loss in large towns where the high volume of transactions required large quantities of small change will be a lot different from the coin assemblages yielded by rural settlements.[28] Equally, finds from frontier fortresses tend to be dominated by large denominations and a remarkable chronological consistency pointing to the regular payment dispatched to the troops, which also involved bronze coins.[29] The study of coin finds based on chronology, denomination, and mint will highlight such differences and help answer questions about the economic integration of rural areas and the development of urban markets. Indeed, the power of the comparative approach could be greatly enhanced by including coins in the equation, as they can reveal degrees of standardization and implementation of major policies, as well as local answers to local crises.[30]

Historians studying various types of Byzantine settlements have much to learn from coin finds by developing comparisons between similar contexts on different archaeological sites (churches/synagogues, shops, residential areas, etc.). For example, commercial areas or "shops" have been excavated in many

---

A.D., in K. Bartl / A. Al–Razzaq Moaz (eds.), Residences, castles, settlements. Transformation processes from Late Antiquity to Early Islam in Bilal al-Sham. Rahden 2008, 433 – 463; S.T. Parker (ed.), The Roman frontier in Central Jordan. Final report on the Limes Arabicus Project, 1980 – 1989. Washington, DC 2006.

27 Of course coins exchanged many hands over many decades and a direct connection between the location of the mint and the place where the coin was eventually lost cannot be established with any confidence, unless the coins are uncirculated.

28 See for example, E. Oberländer-Târnoveanu, Les échanges dans le monde rural byzantin de l'est des Balkans (VIe–XIe siècle), in Lefort / Morrisson / Sodini, Les villages (as footnote 26 above), 381 – 386.

29 S. Mihaylov, Видовете номинали в монетното обращение на Византийските провинции Скития и Втора Мизия (498 – 681 г.), in I. Lazarenko (ed.), Numismatic, sphragistic and epigraphic contributions to the history of the Black Sea coast, vol. 1. Varna 2008, 278 – 300.

30 The uneven withdrawal of coinage which no longer corresponded to the current weight standard is a case in point, for which see A. Gandila, Heavy money, weightier problems: the Justinianic reform of 538 and its economic consequences. *Revue numismatique* 168 (2012) 363 – 402. Localized patterns of circulation can be seen most clearly at Berytus where the small module coinage of Anastasius (498 – 512) dominated the local economy until the mid-sixth century, although it had largely disappeared from other towns in Syria-Palestine and the wider Mediterranean; see most recently G. Abou Diwan, Base-metal coin circulation in Byzantine Beirut. *American Journal of Numismatics* 29 (2017), forthcoming. For a region-wide development, a good example is the avoidance of Justinianic post-reform folles in Palestinian towns, for which see Bijovsky, Gold coin (as footnote 16 above), 247 – 254.

urban centers of the Early Byzantine Empire.[31] In cases where the coin finds have been published, such as Sardis (Lydia), Scythopolis (Palestina II), and Tomis (Scythia), a common characteristic seems to be the significant presence of smaller fractions of the *follis*, which may point to the higher frequency of low-value transactions.[32] Likewise, Early Byzantine churches in the Balkans were often preferred for concealing coin hoards, just as synagogues in Palestine sometimes played this function. Hoards buried in basilicas from Agia Kyriaki (Achaia), Caričin Grad (Dacia Mediterranea), Varna (Moesia Secunda), and Histria (Scythia) date to a time of insecurity in the second half of the sixth century and were never retrieved.[33] To be sure, differences can be noted even in situations where the function of the complex appears to be similar. For instance, the finds from the baths of Hammat Gader are different from those of Berytus (BEY045), as they include a significant number of low denominations down to the *nummus*, while at Berytus they are mostly *folles* and half-*folles*.[34] From a numismatic standpoint these are mere observations, but in conjunction with other archaeological finds coins can potentially make a significant contribution.

4. Hoarding and breaks in coin circulation. Late Antiquity was marked by cultural transition and historians have long defined this period in terms of political, religious, and economic transformation. Interruptions in coin circulation have

---

31 For a recent overview and bibliographic essay on this topic, see A. Bandow, The late antique economy: infrastructures of transport and retail, in Lavan, Local economies? (as footnote 1 above), 83 – 89.

32 To be sure, in most of these cases we are probably dealing with a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential structures. For the finds, see M. D. Weishan, Appendix 1: Conspectus of mints, in J. Stephens Crawford, The Byzantine shops at Sardis. Cambridge, MA 1990, 126 – 128; G. Bijovski, The coins, in S. Agady / M. Arazi / B. Arubas / S. Hadad / E. Khamis / Y. Tsafir, The Bet Shean Archaeological Project, in L.V. Rutgers (ed.), What Athens has to do with Jerusalem. Essays on classical, Jewish, and early Christian art and archaeology in honor of Gideon Foerster. Leuven 2002, 507 – 512; Poenaru Bordea / Ocheșeanu / Popeea, Monnaies byzantines (as footnote 14 above). On shops and coin circulation, see A. Walmsley, Regional exchange and the role of the shop in Byzantine and Early Islamic Syria-Palestine: an archaeological view, in Morrisson (ed.), Trade and markets (as footnote 7 above), 312 – 330.

33 Morrisson / V. Popović / Ivanišević (eds.), Les trésors (as footnote 15 above), 156 – 157, no. 58; 178 – 179, no. 179; and 297 – 298, no. 215 – 216; G. Poenaru Bordea / M. Dima, Monnaies, in A. Suceveanu (ed.), Histria XIII. La basilique épiscopale. Bucharest 2007, 192 – 193.

34 Butcher, Archaeology (as footnote 13 above), 257 – 277; R. Barkay, Roman and Byzantine coins, in Y. Hirschfeld, The Roman baths of Hammat Gader. Final report. Jerusalem 1997, 279 – 300.

been used to describe conditions during the Byzantine "Dark Age,"[35] while hoarding has become a marker of insecurity and an indicator of barbarian invasion in the later part of the sixth century.[36] However, such evidence needs to be studied more systematically in order to understand the degrees of continuity and discontinuity in the Mediterranean world.[37] More historians and archaeologists need to join in the conversation, as specific regional studies can shed more light on the reasons behind the interruption of coin circulation or the motivations behind the abandoning of hoards buried for safekeeping.[38] A careful study of the archaeological context can reveal hoarding patterns which can help scholars distinguish between sudden events (e. g. destruction, abandonment) and long-term developments (e. g. urban decline, economic instability).[39] Hoards can be a snapshot of the monetary economy at the date of deposition ("emergency hoards") or can constitute collections of valuable coins selected

---

35 For the history of the debate and new directions, see recently F. Curta, Postcards from Maurilia, or the historiography of the Dark-Age cities of Byzantium. *Post-Classical Archaeologies* 6 (2016) 89 – 110.

36 I. Iurukova, Византийските крепости на юг от Балкана в светлината на монетните сукровища от последните десетилетия на VI век. *Numizmatika, sfragistika i epigrafika* 6 (2010) 99 – 108; V. Ivanišević, Les trésors balcaniques, témoins des invasions et de leurs routes, in Morrisson / Popović / Ivanišević (eds.), Les trésors (as footnote 15 above), 75 – 93; A. Madgearu, The province of Scythia and the Avaro-Slavic invasions (576 – 626). *Balkan Studies* 37 (1996) 35 – 61. See previously V. Popović, Les témoins archéologiques des invasions avaro-slaves dans l'Illyricum byzantin. *MEFRA* 87 (1975) 445 – 504; V. Popović, La descente des Koutrigours, des Slaves et des Avars vers la Mer Égée: le témoignage de l'archéologie. *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 1978/6, 596 – 648.

37 See, for instance, Arab-Byzantine coinage which has become one the most dynamic subfields; major contributions to the knowledge of this transitional coinage include C. Foss, Arab-Byzantine coins: an introduction with a catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks collection. Washington, DC 2008; H. Pottier / I. Schulze / W. Schulze, Pseudo-Byzantine coinage in Syria under Arab rule (638 – 670). *Revue Belge de Numismatique et de Sigillographie* 154 (2008) 87 – 161; T. Goodwin, Arab-Byzantine coinage. London 2005; S. Album / T. Goodwin, Sylloge of Islamic coins in the Ashmolean. Vol 1: The pre-reform coinage of the Early Islamic period. Oxford 2002.

38 See, for instance, S. Mihaylov, Life-span of the settlements in the provinces of Moesia Secunda and Scythia as evidenced by coin finds (late 5th–early 7th c. AD), in L. Vagalinski / N. Sharankov / S. Torbatov (eds.), The Lower Danube Roman limes (1st–6th c. AD). Sofia 2012, 462 – 475; M. Waner / Z. Safrai, A catalogue of coin hoards and the *shelf life* of coins in Palestine hoards during the Roman and Byzantine periods. *Liber Annuus* 51 (2001) 305 – 36.

39 Curta / Gandila, Hoards and hoarding patterns (as footnote 16 above), 45 – 111; C. Morrisson, La fin de l'Antiquité dans les Balkans à la lumière des trésors monétaires des VIe et VIIe siècles. *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 2007/2 661 – 684.

for hoarding ("savings hoards") but never retrieved. However, a structural comparison between emergency hoards and the body of single finds on the same site may reveal incongruities due to the different function of buildings and their respective pattern of casual loss. Furthermore, although hoards have been used to date the destruction of Byzantine fortresses, this is not always a reliable tool.[40] When it comes to determining breaks in circulation, the analysis of single finds can add more depth to the conclusions drawn on the basis of hoards.[41] For example, historians have traditionally dated the end of Roman rule in the northern Balkans to 602 after the mutiny of Phocas, a theory apparently strengthened by the sudden decrease in the frequency of hoarding in the northern Balkans after this date. However, a careful reassessment of numismatic data from archaeological finds and local museum collections has revealed a much longer process and a greater degree of continuity during a transitional phase which lasted until c. 680.[42] A similar trajectory of continuity and change illuminated by the numismatic evidence has been noted in North Africa as the region transitioned, sometimes painfully, from Roman, to Vandal, Byzantine, and finally, Arab domination.[43]

5. Connections with the outside world. The renewed interest in the study of Byzantium's neighbors in the context of sixth- and seventh-century warfare and diplomacy has a lot to gain from the inclusion of numismatic evidence.[44] Such attempts in the case of the Avar khaganate have produced important results which have helped highlight not only the Byzantine response to the Avar threat but also the creation of an Avar identity in relation to Byzantium. Byzantine coins were melted down to produce spectacular jewelry, were included in burials

---

40 The case of Sadovets in Dacia Ripensis is one of the best documented, for which see M. Mackensen, Zu den Schlussmünzen der Münzreihen und der Schatzfunde von Sadovsko Kale und Golemanovo Kale, in S. Uenze (ed.), Die spätantiken Befestigungen von Sadovec (Bulgarien). Ergebnisse der deutsch-bulgarisch-österreichischen Ausgrabungen 1934 – 1937. Munich 1992, 351 – 354.

41 For a good example of this principle, see C. Foss, Syria in transition, A.D. 550 – 750: an archaeological approach. *DOP* 51 (1997) 189 – 269.

42 A. Barnea, Einige Bemerkungen zur Chronologie des Limes an der unteren Donau in spätrömischer Zeit. *Dacia* 34 (1990) 283 – 290; S. Mihaylov, Seventh-to-eighth-century Byzantine bronze coins from Northeastern Bulgaria. *Cultură și Civilizație la Dunărea de Jos* 26 (2008) 77 – 85; A. Gandila, A few rare Byzantine coins found in Dobrudja and the extent of Byzantine control in the seventh-century Balkans. *Cercetări Numismatice* 17 (2016) 53 – 64.

43 See most recently Morrisson, "Regio" (as footnote 16 above), 173 – 198.

44 See in particular the essays in Wołoszyn (ed.), Byzantine coins in Central Europe (as footnote 4 above).

as *oboli*, or simply worn as pendants on necklaces.[45] Coins can help historians make sense of cultural interaction between Byzantium and the world of barbarians or in highly sensitive regions like the Transcaucasus where Byzantine interests clashed with the ambitions of rival Persia.[46] In Lazica, Iberia, and Armenia Byzantine silver hexagrams competed with Persian silver drachms, while in the Caucasus Mountains the fickleness of local tribes, always wavering between the two superpowers, brought gold and silver often included in elite burials.[47] Byzantine coins became such an integral part of social customs in the Caucasus that many were imitated for the sole purpose of being deposited in graves.[48] Finally, historians trying to understand conditions in the Eastern European *barbaricum* where written sources are lacking can learn about the social values of early medieval communities by studying the ways in which Byzantine coins became part of the local culture.[49]

In conclusion, despite its limitations the quantity and quality of coins as primary source material and window into the daily activities of the Early Byzantine Mediterranean world justifies the need for an audience wider than the numismatic community. The existence of such a strong and well-established field with its own tools, methods, and literature may seem convenient to those historians and archaeologists who are content to cite a few specialized articles without attempting to join the conversation. However, keeping the distance is unjustified and the historiography of the past two centuries shows that it is also unfruitful. In fact, coins are far less esoteric than other categories of artifacts and the body of scholarship produced since the early days of the discipline can guide histor-

---

45 See recently P. Somogyi, Byzantinische Fundmünzen der Awarenzeit in ihrem europäischen Umfeld. Budapest 2014.

46 A. Carile, Il Caucaso e l'Imperio bizantino (secoli VI–XI), in: Il Caucaso: cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV–XI), vol. 1. Spoleto 1996, 9–80. For the context, see B. Dignas / E. Winter, Rome and Persia in late antiquity: neighbours and rivals. Cambridge 2007.

47 Kh. Mousheghian / A. Mousheghian / C. Bresc, History and coin finds in Armenia: coins from Duin, capital of Armenia, 6–7th c.: inventory of Byzantine and Sasanian coins in Armenia, 6–7th c. Wetteren 2000; I. Tsukhishvili / G. Depeyrot, History and coin finds in Georgia: Late Roman and Byzantine hoards (4th–13th c.). Wetteren 2003; M. Kazanski / A. Mastykova, Les peuples du Caucase du Nord. Le début de l'histoire (Ier–VIIe siècle apr. J.-C.). Paris 2003.

48 Y. A. Prokopenko, Byzantine coins of the 5th–9th century and their imitations in the Central and Eastern Ciscaucasus, in Wołoszyn (ed.), Byzantine coins in Central Europe (as footnote 4 above), 417–448.

49 E. Oberländer-Târnoveanu, La monnaie byzantine des VIe–VIIIe siècles au-delà de la frontière du Bas-Danube. Entre politique, economie et diffusion culturelle. *Histoire et Mesure* 17 (2002) 155–196; A. Gandila, Cultural encounters on Byzantium's northern frontier, c. AD 500–700: coins, artifacts and history. Cambridge 2018 (forthcoming).

ians and archeologists into making good use of this source. To be sure, the disciplines have long been inextricably connected. It is the people involved that need to join forces to make the most of what will always remain a frustratingly thin body of evidence.



Fig. 1. Capidava, aerial photograph (2015)

III. Case study: Capidava and the Balkan frontier

Raised by Emperor Trajan at the beginning of the second century, Capidava became an important Roman fortress on the Lower Danube frontier due to its strategic position on a natural hill guarding a river bend where the Danube could be easily forded (Fig. 1).[50] The fortress retained its significance in the sixth century

---

50 G. Florescu, Capidava în cadrul organizării limesului dunărean al Dobrogei antice, in G. Florescu / R. Florescu / P. Diaconu, Capidava I. Monografie arheologică. Bucharest 1958, 12 – 13. The Geto-Dacian toponym "Capidava," which predates the Roman conquest, has been translated as "the fortress (*dava*) at the river bend (*čâpa*)," for which see W. Tomaschek, Die alten Thraker. Eine ethnologische Untersuchung, vol. II/2. Vienna 1893, 83.

being one of the 15 towns (πόλεις) mentioned in Hierocles' guide.[51] Its status was probably bolstered by the episcopal see established here since the fourth century.[52] The significance of Capidava in the Roman defense system is testified not only by the wealth of archaeological material brought to light, but also by the decision to rebuild the fortifications after a sequence of devastating fires which consumed large areas of the settlement (Fig. 2). Almost a century of archaeological excavations have produced an impressive quantity of artifacts and coins making Capidava a good case for asking many of the questions suggested above. How can coins contribute to a better understanding of life in the frontier region and the connection of frontier settlements with the wider Byzantine world? For the sake of clarity, we should follow the plan laid out in the previous section.



Fig. 2. Sixth-century Capidava: general architectural plan

1. Emphasis on bronze coinage. Excavations in and around the fortress have yielded hundreds of Roman and Byzantine coins of which more than 200 are Early Byzantine, dated to the sixth and early seventh centuries.[53] Only one

51 Hierocles, *Synecdemus*, 637/10 (ed. A. Burckhardt. Leipzig 1893, 4).
52 *Notitiae Episcopatuum* 3.40, no. 644 (ed. J. Darrouzès. Paris 1981, 242).
53 A. Gandila, Early Byzantine Capidava: the numismatic evidence. *Cercetări Numismatice* 12 – 13 (2006 – 2007) 113 – 118; G. Custurea, Noi descoperiri monetare din Dobrogea (sec. V–VII).

gold coin was found, a *solidus* of Justinian, which turned out to be a gold-plated ancient counterfeit.[54] A glass *exagium solidi* found in the sixth-century *horreum* in the southern part of the fortress indicates that people at Capidava did also handle real gold coins, but because of their great value they were rarely lost.[55] Many bronze coins were found in a clear archaeological context, sometimes helping with stratigraphic dating or contextualizing the finds from residential buildings, the Christian basilica, the Late Roman *horreum*, and the docks. Unfortunately, the size of the sample is insufficient for discerning circulation patterns based on the function of the buildings where the coins were found. Likewise, comparisons with other fortresses in the Balkans must remain generic. In addition to the single finds, dominated by the coinage of Justinian I and Justin II, a hoard of 51 bronze coins was found in a building adjacent to a destroyed tower, not far from the main gate.[56] Finally, some coins were retrieved from the Middle Byzantine layer where sunken-featured buildings often cut into the Early Byzantine phase, as well as on the river bank and on the ancient roads connecting the fortress with the countryside.

2. Long-distance circulation of people and goods. Coin finds illustrate Capidava's strong connection to the Mediterranean world (Fig. 3). Six different mints are so far recorded in the corpus of Early Byzantine finds from Capidava. More than half of all coins are Constantinopolitan issues, which is not a surprise given the proximity to the central mint and the general circulation pattern in the Balkan provinces.[57] There is a slightly lower number of coins from Thessalonica compared to Nicomedia signaling the fact that the fortress was sometimes more closely connected to the sea than to the Danube itself, since Thessalonican coins are far more abundant upstream, in the fortresses defending the provinces of Dacia Ripensis and Moesia Prima.[58] The half-*folles* of Thessalonica are more

---

Pontica 41 (2008) 536 – 537; G. Custurea, Monede bizantine recent descoperite în Dobrogea (sec. VI–VII). *Pontica* 45 (2012) 620 – 621.

54 Z. Covacef, Capidava, in: Cronica cercetărilor arheologice 1983 – 1992. Bucharest 1997, 20.

55 I. Opriș, Ceramica romană târzie şi paleobizantină de la Capidava în contextul descoperirilor de la Dunărea de Jos (sec. IV–VI p. Chr.). Bucharest 2003, 33.

56 A. Gandila, A hoard of sixth-century coppers and the end of Roman Capidava, in I. C. Opriș / A. Rațiu, Capidava II. Building C1 – Contributions to the history of *annona militaris* in the 6th century. Cluj-Napoca 2017, 161 – 174. See previously, A. Gandila, Un tezaur de monede bizantine timpurii descoperit la Capidava. *Cercetări Numismatice* 15 (2009) 87 – 105.

57 C. Morrisson / V. Ivanišević, Les émissions des VIe–VIIe siècles et leur circulation dans les Balkans, in Morrisson / Popović / Ivanišević, Les trésors (as footnote 15 above), 57 – 63.

58 Sucidava: A. Vîlcu/ E. Nicolae, Monede bizantine descoperite la Sucidava, in B. Ciupercă (ed.), Arheologia mileniului I p. Chr. Cercetări actuale privind istoria și arheologia migrațiilor.

dominant at Tomis, on the Black Sea coast, which shows that the Macedonian mint provided coin to the troops in Illyricum, but also followed the circulation of goods in the Aegean and the Black Sea. This brought to Tomis coins and also Greek imitations of African lamps, as well as other types of ceramic goods.[59] Some were filtered further west to the Danube frontier. Capidava's connection to the sea is also testified by the presence of Pontic amphorae, which account for 28% of the total quantity of Early Byzantine amphorae found inside the fortress.[60] The creation of *quaestura exercitus* by Justinian in 536 helped maintain and even solidify the connection established between the Danubian *limes* and the provinces of Asia Minor. A large number of Phocaean bowls and dishes, especially types LRC3 and LRC10 arrived at Capidava, perhaps together with coins issued by the Propontic mints of Nicomedia and Cyzicus.[61] These include several *decanummia* (1/4 *follis*), a denomination less typical for the frontier region, which might suggest connections with larger settlements along the Black Sea coast or further south into the Aegean.[62] Along with goods, the circulation of people from the western coast of Asia Minor is attested by the presence of foreign names on inscriptions found at Tomis in Scythia.[63]

Bucharest 2010, 285–321. Viminacium: V. Ivanišević, Византијски новац (491–1092) из збирке Народног музеја у Пожаревцу. *Numizmatičar* 11 (1988) 87–99. Singidunum: V. Ivanišević, Византијски новац са Београдске тврђаве. *Numizmatičar* 10 (1987) 88–107. Aquis: Đ. Janković, Подунавски део области Аквиса у VI и почетком VII столећа. Belgrade 1981, 66, annex 3. Sirmium: V. Popović, Catalogue des monnaies Byzantines du musée de Srem, in Dj. Bošković / N. Duval / V. Popović / G. Vallet, Sirmium VIII. Rome 1978, 180–195.

59 T. Isvoranu / G. Poenaru Bordea, Monede bizantine de la Tomis şi împrejurimi în colecţia Institutului de Arheologie "Vasile Pârvan", in E. Nicolae (ed.), Simpozion de numismatică dedicat împlinirii a 125 de ani de la proclamarea independenţei României, Chişinău, 24–26 septembrie 2002. Comunicări, studii şi note. Bucharest 2003, 137–161. For imported lamps, see G. Papuc, Opaițe de import la Tomis. *Pontica* 9 (1976) 201–205. Many "African" lamps were Attic or Corinthian products, for which see J. Perlzweig, The Athenian Agora. Lamps of the Roman period VII. Princeton 1961, pl. 38 sq.; O. Broneer, Terracotta lamps. Corinth, IV/Part II. Cambridge, MA 1930, types XXVIII–XXXIII. For the diffusion of such lamps in the Black Sea region, see recently F. Curta, Shedding light on a murky matter: remarks on 6th to early 7th century clay lamps in the Balkans. *Archaeologia Bulgarica* 20 (2016) 60–65. For the ceramic evidence, see C. Abadie-Reynal, Céramique et commerce dans le basin égéen du IVe au VIIe siècle, in C. Morrisson / J. Lefort (eds.), Hommes et richesses dans l'Empire Byzantine. Tome I, IVe–VIIe siècle. Paris 1989, 143–159.

60 Opriș, Ceramica romană (as footnote 55 above), 178.

61 Ibid., 150–153.

62 Gandila, Early Byzantine (as footnote 53 above), 115.

63 A. Barnea, La Dobroudja aux IVe–VIIe siècles n.è., in A. Suceveanu / A. Barnea, La Dobroudja romaine. Bucharest 1991, 243.

The Syrian mint of Antioch accounts for almost 5% of the finds at Capidava and although it is a small percentage it remains the largest in the province of Scythia. The presence of Syrian issues in the Danube region has sometimes been connected with the movement of soldiers, especially in the last decade of the sixth century when Maurice redeployed his troops in the northern Balkans to take the initiative against the Slavs and the Avars.[64] The coins from Capidava, however, date to the age of Justinian, mostly before 550, so a military explanation is less probable.[65] The eulogy flask from Syria-Palestine found at Capidava, an extremely rare find in the north-eastern Balkans, may suggest a connection with the Eastern Mediterranean perhaps facilitated by the administrative association with Caria and Cyprus, included with Scythia in *quaestura exercitus*, as well as by the long-distance distribution of Egyptian grain.[66] Indeed, the new *annona* system was partly successful as it brought in large quantities of eastern transport amphorae types LR1 and LR2 which carried wine and oil.[67] This network of communication in the Mediterranean also brought expensive Gaza wine as no less than eight LR4 amphorae have been found in the building dated with the help of the coin hoard.[68] Since these containers are not typically associated with the state-controlled *annona*, their well-documented presence at Capidava testifies to the fortress's commercial connection to the Eastern Mediterranean as late as 580, probably through the mediation of Tomis on the Black Sea coast.[69]

---

64 On the transfer of troops, see Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 6082 [589/90] (de Boor 267). For the numismatic interpretation, see I. Bogdan Cătăniciu / G. Poenaru Bordea, Un mic tezaur de monede bizantine descoperit la Tropaeum Traiani. *Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române*, 90 – 91 (1996 – 1997) 91. The presence of Sasanian drachms in the province, not far from Capidava, has been interpreted in the same vein; see E. Petac / A. Ionescu, Some Sassanian silver coins discovered at Axiopolis (Cernavodă, Constanța County, Romania). *Irania Antiqua* 48 (2013) 355 – 361.

65 Gandila, Early Byzantine (as footnote 53 above), 115.

66 Opriș, Ceramica romană (as footnote 55 above), 162, no. 391. On grain distributions, see J.-M. Carrié, L'institution annonaire de la première à la deuxième Rome: continuité et innovation, in B. Marin / C. Virlouvet (eds.), Nourrir les cités de méditerranée. Antiquité – temps modernes. Paris 2004, 169 – 170.

67 At Capidava more than 50% of the Oriental amphorae are LR1 and LR2 and this is typical for *quaestura exercitus*; see Opriș / Rațiu, Capidava II (as footnote 56 above), 45 – 52. For LR2 see O. Karagiorgou, LR2: A container for the military *annona* on the Danubian border?, in Kingsley / Decker (eds.), Economy and exchange (as footnote 1 above), 129 – 166.

68 Opriș / Rațiu, Capidava II (as footnote 56 above), 2.1.4, no. 46 – 53.

69 At Tomis empty LR4 amphorae were repurposed to store iron nails; see A. Rădulescu, Amfore cu inscripții de la edificiul roman cu mozaic din Tomis, *Pontica* 6 (1973) 197, fig. 5.

The coins of Antioch remained in circulation at Capidava for several decades as testified by the hoard lost c. 582–586 which contained several pieces issued by the Syrian mint.[70] On the other hand, the monetary connection with the Western Mediterranean was significantly weaker, only one Justinianic *follis* from Carthage being so far recorded at Capidava.[71] North-African *spatheia* amphorae as well as African Red Slip Ware types ARS87, ARS97, and ARS103–105, which saw a wide circulation in the sixth century, are familiar finds at Capidava.[72] Fine African tableware, including a high-quality ARS104 with Christian motifs, was found in the same building as the hoard which included the coin from Carthage, but a firm connection is difficult to establish at this point. In addition, there are no coins from Alexandria so far known at Capidava, although two Egyptian lamps and a Menas flask have been found in the south-western quarter of the fortress.[73] Such coins may appear in excavation in the future as they are more common in other parts of the province, as well as in a hoard found only a few kilometers downstream on the Danube.[74]

3. Distinctions between urban, rural, and fortified contexts. Capidava was a military settlement on the frontier and its function is clearly reflected in the nature of the numismatic evidence. More than 90% of the finds are high denominations, *folles* and half-*folles*, respectively.[75] The chronological sequence of the dated series between 538 and 580, when coin circulation at Capidava was most intense, includes thirteen years for which no finds are so far recorded. Far from signaling moments of crisis, the steady flow of coins remains quite remarkable given the small sample for this time bracket (c. 90 coins; average of c. 2 coins/year). Capidava is in fact no different from most other fortresses of the Lower Danube, whose coin assemblages are dominated by large denominations and high chronological consistency for the most part of the sixth century.[76] This

---

70 Gandila, Un tezaur (as footnote 56 above), 101, fig. 6.
71 Ibid., 93, no. 8.
72 Opriș, Ceramica romană (as footnote 55 above), 144; Z. Covacef, Ceramica de uz comun din sectorul de est al cetăţii Capidava. Sec. IV–VI. *Pontica* 32 (1999) 154–158.
73 Opriș, Ceramica romană (as footnote 55 above), 162, no 390 and 165–166, no. 425–426.
74 Gandila, Going east (as footnote 16 above), 143–147.
75 Gandila, Early Byzantine (as footnote 53 above), 111, table 6.
76 Mihaylov, Vidovete nominali (as footnote 29 above), 280–281. At least for the northern Balkans, Phillip Grierson's suggestion that the scarcity of small denominations on some sites may be due to a certain degree of carelessness in excavation is refuted by the large quantity of fifth-century coins found on the Danube frontier, which are significantly smaller than any Early Byzantine denomination above the nummus. See P. Grierson, The interpretation of coin finds. *NC* 5 (1965) xi. For fifth-century coins at Capidava, see A. Gandila, Greek Imperial,

reflects the regular military salaries disbursed in bronze and the insular monetary economy of the frontier zone.[77] Monetary connections with the wider Byzantine world existed but were by no means the main mechanism bringing coinage to Capidava. Bronze coinage was used for daily transactions whose volume may have not been impressive. The presence of local artisans helped sustain a crude monetary economy, also fueled by the state-directed *annona*. Archaeological finds in the southern half of the fortress testify to the local production of a variety of items of daily use, hand- and wheel-made pottery, ceramic lids, terracotta lamps, textiles, dress accessories, and small pieces of jewelry.[78] Some items were produced at Capidava while others, lamps of the "Danubian" class in particular, elsewhere in the northern Balkans.[79] A pair of Early Byzantine bronze scales found in the eastern part of the town near a *dolium* for storing grain, as well as a glass *exagium* found in a large warehouse, indicate a certain level of economic activity which also involved the use of coins, found in the same context.[80] Furthermore, the consistent pattern of coin loss and the presence of irregular de-

---

Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman coin finds at Capidava (1966 – 2006) in the collection of the National History Museum of Romania. *Pontica* 40 (2007) 610, table 1.

77 The first assumption is that patterns in finds of accidentally lost coins reflect to a great extent the patterns of the coins in circulation. With some cautionary notes, this has been convincingly argued at D. P. Newton, Found coins as indicators of coins in circulation: testing some assumptions. *European Journal of Archaeology* 9 (2006) 211 – 227. The second assumption is that the great majority of coins were lost accidentally and not deliberately abandoned. Unfortunately, in most archaeological contexts it is almost impossible to distinguish between the two situations; in any case, the significant weight of sixth-century coinage and the general poverty of the region speak against the possibility of habitually discarding large bronze pieces.

78 Z. Covacef, Accesorii vestimentare, de toaletă şi podoabe descoperite în sectorul estic al cetăţii Capidava. *Pontica* 28 – 29 (1995 – 1996) 95 – 120; Opriş, Ceramica romană (as footnote 55 above), 180 – 187; Opriș / Rațiu, Capidava II (as footnote 56 above), 124 and cat. no. 124 – 154 (vertical loom).

79 Z. Covacef, Câteva observaţii pe marginea unor opaiţe descoperite în sectorul V al Capidavei. *Pontica* 26 (1993) 245 – 251. Molds for the production of such lamps have been found at Tomis and Kranevo, for which see C. Iconomu, Descoperiri de tipare de opaițe la Tomis. *Pontica* 9 (1976) 135 – 145; Kranevo: G. Toncheva, Керамична работилница край с. Кранево. *Izvestiia Bulgarskoto Arkheologičesko Družestvo* 9 (1952) 81 – 104.

80 Z. Covacef / T. Potârniche, Accesorii ale unei balanțe din bronz descoperite în sectorul de est al Capidavei. *Pontica* 43 (2010) 268. Another pair of sixth-century bronze scales, bearing the name of Gerontios, prefect of Constantinople during the reign of Justinian, was found downstream at Dinogetia, for which see G. Ștefan, O balanță romană din secolul VI e.n. descoperită în Dobrogea. *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche* 1 (1950) 152 – 162. For the *exagium*, see footnote 55 above. For other glass *exagia solidi* in the Balkans, see D. Vladimirova-Aladzhova, За ранновизантийските стъклени екзагии от Буьлгария. *Arkheologiya* (2007), no. 1 – 4, 150 – 161.

nominations such as the 16-*nummia* and the 30-*nummia* seem to suggest a constant flow of coin to an adaptable frontier market.[81]

The numismatic distinction between frontier fortresses like Capidava, on one hand, and rural settlements and larger cities, on the other, can illuminate the peculiar nature of the monetary economy on the frontier as well as more general connections. Large inland settlements in Scythia, such as Adamclisi and Ibida boast a far larger number of lower denominations, *decanummia* and *pentanummia*, and their significance tends to increase as one moves eastward toward the Black Sea, where coastal towns like Argamum, Histria, Tomis, Acres, and Agathopolis enjoyed a more developed market economy, with a superior frequency of transactions involving small change.[82] To be sure, the size of the settlement, not just its function and location played a role in the development of a local monetary economy. A medium-sized fortress like Capidava maintained a more autarchic economy, while finds from larger settlements on the Danube, such as Noviodunum and Durostorum, display a greater variety of mints and denominations as well as an overall larger sample.[83] Cities of the eastern Balkans themselves appear to have developed a more rudimentary monetary economy compared to Greek cities like Athens and Corinth, Sardis in Asia Minor, Antioch in Syria, or Caesarea Maritima in Palestine.[84] The explanation has to do with the

---

81 Gandila, Early Byzantine (as footnote 53 above), 115, no. 56 and 118, no. 145.

82 Adamclisi and Ibida: G. Custurea, Date noi privind circulaţia monedei bizantine în Dobrogea (sec. V–VII). *Pontica* 37 – 38 (2004 – 2005) 506; 524 – 525. Argamum: M. Iacob / G. Poenaru Bordea, Les monnaies des IVe–VIIe siècles découvertes à Argamum (Scythie Mineure), in B. Kluge / B. Weisser (eds.), XII. Internationaler Numismatischer Kongress Berlin 1997, Akten–Proceedings–Actes II. Berlin 2000, 791, table V. Histria: C. Preda / H. Nubar, Histria III, Descoperirile monetare, 1914 – 1970. Bucharest 1973, 198 – 233. Tomis: Isvoranu / Poenaru Bordea, Monede bizantine (as footnote 59 above), 152, table 2. Acres: V. Parušev, Античните монети от Калиакра. *Izvestiya Narodni Muzey Varna* 27 (1991) 32 – 36. Agathopolis: I. Iordanov / A. Koichev / V. Mutafov, Средновековният Ахтопол VI–XIII в. според данните нумизматиката и сфрагистика. *Numizmatika i Sfragistika* 5 (1998) 71 – 75, tables 1 – 11.

83 G. Poenaru Bordea / E. Nicolae / A. Popescu, Contributions numismatiques à l'histoire de Noviodunum aux VIe–VIIe siècles. *Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică* 11 (1995) 135 – 161; M. Dobre, L'impact de la réforme d'Anastase sur la circulation monétaire a Durostorum. *Dobrudža* 12 (1995) 122 – 132; E. Oberländer-Târnoveanu, Monnaies byzantines des VIIe–Xe siècles découvertes a Silistra dans la collection de l'Académicien Péricle Papahagi consevées au Cabinet des Medailles du Musée National d'Histoire de Roumanie. *Cercetări Numismatice* 7 (1996) 97 – 127.

84 Athens: Thompson, The Athenian Agora (as footnote 12 above), 67 – 71. Corinth: K.M. Edwards, Corinth VI: coins (as footnote 12 above), 121 – 133; R.L. Hohlfelder, Kenchreai, eastern port of Corinth. III: the coins. Leiden 1978, 63 – 75. Sardis: T.V. Buttrey, Byzantine, medieval and modern coins and tokens, in T.V. Buttrey / A. Johnson / K.M. Mac Kenzie / M.L. Bates,

history and monetary tradition of the settlements themselves, the wealth and security of the region, as well as the level of priority accorded by the Byzantine government. The provinces of the Balkans were strategically significant, but economically they represented a drain for the Byzantine treasury.[85]

The wealth of numismatic material found on the Danube frontier stands in sharp contrast with what we know from other frontier regions of the Early Byzantine world. The desert frontier in Jordan, explored by the Limes Arabicus project, produced a significantly smaller body of evidence in settlements like el-Lejjūn compared to Capidava on the Danube. This is all the more striking as Capidava (1.3 ha) is more than three times smaller than el-Lejjūn (4.6 ha).[86] The early abandonment of the site in mid-sixth century as well as the strategy of relying on Arabian federates explain this difference. The prevalence of lower denominations in Arabia adds a second important distinction and may have something to do with the location of el-Lejjūn on the main trade routes of this period.[87] Likewise, the important fortress of Pityus (Bich'vinta) in Abkhazia, guarding Lazica and the foothills of the Caucasus, produced three times fewer coin finds compared to Capidava. Its access to the Black Sea explains the presence of coins from Carthage and Rome as well as imitations from the Balkans, in addition to a superior number of lower denominations probably brought from larger cities of the Black Sea or the Aegean.[88]

Although still poorly documented, rural settlements seem to have remained in monetary contact with frontier fortresses and larger towns in the northern Balkans. Local producers probably came to Capidava to sell their wares and produce, although this could only supplement rather than supplant the annonary system. In any case, this helped sustain a low level of monetization in the rural settlements scattered throughout Capidava's hinterland. Two Justinianic

Greek, Roman, and Islamic coins from Sardis. Cambridge, MA 1981, 204–224; Bates, Byzantine coins (as footnote 12 above). Antioch: Waage, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (as footnote 12 above), 148–165. Caesarea Maritima: DeRose Evans, The joint expedition (as footnote 13 above), 180–203.

85 A.G. Poulter, Cataclysm on the Lower Danube: the destruction of a complex Roman landscape, in Christie (ed.), Landscape (as footnote 26 above), 223–253.

86 Opriş, Ceramica romană (as footnote 55 above), 19; S.T. Parker, History of the Roman Frontier east of the Dead Sea, in Parker (ed.), The Roman frontier (as footnote 26 above), 546.

87 Ibid. 434–437.

88 I. Tsukhishvili, Bich'vint'is bizant'iuri monet'ebi, in A. Apakidze (ed.), Didi Pit'iunt'i. Arkeologiuri gatkhrebi Bich'vint'ashi, vol. 2. Tbilisi 1977, 314–327; T. Abramishvili, Sakartvelos sakhelmts'ipo muzeumis (1966–1984), 16–24; I. Tsukhishvili / G. Depeyrot, History and coin finds in Georgia: Late Roman and Byzantine hoards (4th–13th c.). Wetteren 2003, 72–73, no. 4. On the Lazi carrying on a thriving commerce in the Black Sea, see Agathias, *Historiae* III 5.3 (ed. R. Keydell. Berlin 1967, 88–89).

decanummia found at Topalu, a few kilometers north of the fortress, prove that low denominations were also handled in rural contexts.[89] On the other hand, the less consistent chronology of the finds in rural areas of the Balkans, marked by many gaps during the sixth century, might betray significant economic differences between the two types of settlement as well as a growing isolation toward the end of the century.[90] The government's frequent inability to collect taxes from the northern Balkans may have decreased the motivation to use money in rural environments and forced coin circulation to become erratic.[91] More systematic excavations of rural settlements around Capidava and elsewhere in the province could further clarify the connection between town and countryside in the north-eastern Balkans.[92]

4. Hoarding and breaks in coin circulation. During the 2008 and 2009 campaigns a hoard of 51 copper coins, all large denominations, was found inside Building C1, adjacent to a collapsed tower.[93] The archaeological assemblage dating to the sixth century was rich in artifacts, some of them intact, mixed with debris and burnt remains from the collapsed building. The hoard itself was placed on a wooden counter (or in a box) in proximity of objects such as storage *dolia*, transport amphorae, lamps, a felting mill, fish hooks, and weights from a vertical loom, all indicating that the building had some type of economic

89 The rural finds closest to Capidava are the single finds from Seimeni and Topalu and a hoard from Topalu, respectively, for which see A. Gandila, Sixth-to-seventh-century coin circulation in Dobrudja. *Cercetări Numismatice* 9 – 11 (2003 – 2005) 141 and 151; Custurea, Date noi (as footnote 82 above), 525 – 526.

90 Significant gaps have been noted for the last quarter of the sixth century, for which see E. Oberländer-Târnoveanu, La monnaie dans l'espace rural byzantin des Balkans Orientaux – un essai de synthèse au commencement du XXI[e] siècle. *Peuce* 14 (2003) 347 – 350. To be sure, the overall smaller statistical sample may indicate a lower level of monetization and not necessarily long interruptions in coin circulation.

91 For difficulties in the collection of taxes from the Danube region, see E. Popescu, Le village en Scythie Mineure (Dobroudja) à l'époque protobyzantine, in Lefort / Morrisson / Sodini, Les villages (as footnote 26 above), 379.

92 P. Diaconu / R. Florescu, Urme de așezări în jurul Capidavei, in Florescu / Florescu / Diaconu, Capidava (as footnote 50 above), 245 – 247. For the state of rural archaeology in the Balkans, see A. G. Poulter, The Lower Danubian frontier in Late Antiquity: evolution and dramatic change in the frontier zone, in P. Herz / P. Schmid / O. Stoll (eds.), Zwischen Region und Reich: das Gebiet der oberen Donau im Imperium Romanum. Berlin 2010, 35 – 40. On rural life in the sixth century, see F. Curta, Peasants as "makeshift soldiers for the occasion": sixth-century settlement patterns in the Balkans," in Burns/ Eadie (eds.), Urban centers (as footnote 26 above), 199 – 217.

93 Gandila, Un tezaur (as footnote 56 above), 87 – 105.

function.[94] A dendrochronological study of the wood remains has revealed a correlation with slow-grown oak (*Quercus* sp.) used at the Yenikapı port in Constantinople suggesting that timber was exported from the Danube region to the Byzantine capital.[95] Several fourth-to-fifth century coins affected by the same fire were found scattered on the floor in different parts of the room. They were not part of the hoard but they belong to the same archaeological context. The prolonged circulation of Late Roman coinage into the sixth century is well documented in areas with a rich monetary history such as Greece, Italy, and the Levant, but the reuse of ancient coins seems to have been practiced on the Lower Danube as well, even as late as 580.[96] If confirmed by further research, this will significantly change our understanding of the monetary economy in the frontier region and could potentially have implications for state-directed affairs such as taxation, the control of old and new currency, and the implementation of official weight standards.

The hoard from Capidava provides a window into the life of a frontier fort in the second half of the sixth century. The archaeological context indicates that we are not dealing with a savings account of coins carefully selected for hoarding and accumulated over time. The hoard is a casual sum of money lost in unfortunate circumstances and faithfully reflects the daily nature of monetary exchanges at Capidava in the later decades of the sixth century. Justinian's heavy series (538 – 550) accounts for almost one-third of the hoard, which is remarkable considering that the hoard was lost in the early 580s. By this time the weight of the *follis* had dropped by some 50 percent and yet at Capidava *folles* of varying weights circulated side by side.[97] The military culture of the Northern Balkans seems to have allowed bronze coinage to develop a more pronounced fiduciary profile. The latest coins in the hoard are two half-*folles* of Tiberius II. Unfortunately, given the criteria for dating this coinage, it is impossible to deter-

94 I. Opriș / A. Rațiu, An Early Byzantine building next to the main gate at Capidava, in A. Panaite / R. Cîrjan / C. Căpiță (eds.), Moesica et Christiana: Studies in honour of Professor Alexandru Barnea. Brăila 2016, 199 – 200.

95 T. Ważny / P. I. Kuniholm / C. L. Pearson, Dendrochronology of the early Byzantine fort at Capidava, in Opriș / Rațiu, Capidava II (as footnote 56 above), 175 – 182.

96 The use of small denominations, *nummi* in particular, declined sharply in the second half of the sixth century and with it the use of small Late Roman AE3 and AE4; for the problem, see Curta / Gandila, Hoards and hoarding (as footnote 16 above), 59 – 62; Bijovsky, Gold coin (as footnote 16 above), 258 – 260. In Italy this practice endured into the seventh century, e. g. L. Saguì / A. Rovelli, Residualità, non residualità, continuità di circolazione, in F. Guidobaldi / C. Pavolini / P. Pergola (eds.), I materiali residui nello scavo archeologico. Rome 1998, 186 – 195.

97 Gandila, Heavy money (as footnote 30 above), 363 – 402.

mine with more precision when the coins were issued within Tiberius II's short reign.[98] Furthermore, there are no coin finds recorded at Capidava for the years 580/82 – 586, which suggests that the destruction of Building C1 where the hoard was found was not an isolated misfortune, but a tragic event that affected the entire settlement.[99]

Trying to link every lost hoard to a barbarian invasion does not seem methodologically sound, but in cases of well-dated massive destruction this approach can provide plausible scenarios. Clues for identifying the event may be found in the account of John of Ephesus who lamented the fate of the Balkan provinces where the Slavs "pillaged and burned everything all the way to the Long Walls."[100] Slavic invaders could have crossed the river by using the ford guarded by Capidava, which means that the fortress would have been directly targeted by the attackers. The beginning of this three-year loot and plunder spree in the Balkans was dated to 581 and its historical consequences are still up for debate.[101] The hoard from Building C1 is a precious find from an undisturbed archaeological context whose interpretation can be extrapolated to other contemporary hoards from the north-eastern Balkans, concealed during the massive Slavic invasion and never retrieved. Indeed, the late 570s and early 580s were years of extensive hoarding, well documented through the finds from Axiopolis, Varna, Abritus, and Koprivets.[102] Alternatively, these hoards could have been lost during the massive offensive of the Avars in 586, described in detail by Theophylact Si-

98 W. Hahn / M. Metlich, Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire Continued (Justin II – Revolt of the Heraclii 565 – 610). Vienna 2009, 40.

99 The first assumption is that most coins reached the frontier region the same year when they were issued, while some would have arrived at a later date through the channels of monetary circulation. Thus, few or no coins from a certain year would indicate some type of disruption affecting the normal flow of fresh coin. The second assumption is that a soldier's salary, estimated at c. 1.5 *solidi*/year, was disbursed in base metal coinage at the current exchange rate between gold and copper. This pattern of circulation applies only to a militarized frontier region where most of the local coinage came regularly and chiefly through official channels reflecting higher levels of dirigisme; in urban environments where monetary circulation was driven by free market forces the date stamp on a coin provides nothing more than a *terminus post quem*. For military wages, see Jones, The later, (as footnote 9 above), 447; C. Morrisson / J.-C. Cheynet, Prices and wages in the Byzantine world, in A. Laiou (ed.), Economic history of Byzantium, vol. 2. Washington, DC 2002, 860, table 16.

100 John of Ephesus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VI 25 (ed. E.I. Brooks. Louvain 1936, 248 – 249).

101 Madgearu, Scythia (as footnote 36 above), 38 – 42.

102 Morrisson / Popović / Ivanišević (eds.), Les trésors (as footnote 16 above), 148 – 149, no. 47 and 156 – 157, no. 59; G. Radoslavova / G. Dzanev, Abritus, in R. Ivanov (ed.), Roman and early Byzantine settlements in Bulgaria, vol. 2. Sofia 2003, 136.

mocatta, whose devastating effects are well-attested elsewhere in the province.[103] Two later destructions documented in the same area of the fortress were coin-dated after 586 and 588, respectively, indicating a series of successive attacks which left a deep mark on the last Roman decades at Capidava.[104] Following this massive series of destructions, the dwindling population of Capidava abandoned the main walls and built a much reduced fortification in the south-western quarter of the settlement, perhaps after the mutiny of Phocas in 602 or as late as c. 615 when the entire length of the Danubian *limes* collapsed.[105] Coins from the last decades of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh still circulated outside this new fortified perimeter testifying to the fact that other areas of the settlement continued to be inhabited.[106]

5. Connections with the outside world. Most frontier fortresses on the Lower Danube boasted a multiethnic culture and an identity which blended Roman traditions with "barbarian" practices. At Capidava this is evidenced by the non-Roman hand-made pottery. The archaeological context in which the hand-made pots have been found presents us with a perplexing association of such "barbaric" types with a large quantity of regular Roman amphorae and cooking wares.[107] It reflects the growing "barbarization" of frontier culture which accelerated the existing process of economic decline and ruralization. Some of the non-Roman pots belong to the Penkovka and Prague class usually associated with the Antes and the early Slavs, respectively.[108] However, the inventory of hand-made pottery is more diverse and includes shapes deriving from the pre-Roman tradition or influenced by the Sarmatic or Germanic groups whose cultural footprint defines the multicultural nature of the Danube frontier in Late Antiquity.[109] In addition to pottery, the presence of buckles of the Sucidava

---

103 Theophylact, *Historia*, I 8.10 – 11 (ed. C. de Boor. Leipzig, 1887, 54 – 55); Madgearu, Scythia (as footnote 36 above), 43 – 47.

104 Opriș / Rațiu, Capidava II (as footnote 56 above), 43 note 84.

105 A *follis* from 594/95 found under the makeshift wall provides a useful *terminus post quem*; Gandila, Early Byzantine (as footnote 53 above), 106.

106 Gandila, Early Byzantine (as footnote 53 above), 118. The last Early Byzantine coin found so far at Capidava is a *follis* of Heraclius from 612 – 613.

107 Opriș, Ceramica romană (as footnote 55 above), 102 – 113.

108 For the Prague type, see F. Curta, The Prague type: a critical approach to pottery classification. *Archaeologia Bulgarica* 5 (2001) 73 – 106. For the Penkovka culture, see recently B. S. Szmoniewski, The Antes: eastern 'brothers' of the Sclavenes?, in F. Curta (ed.), Neglected barbarians. Turnhout 2010, 53 – 82.

109 E. S. Teodor, Handmade pottery from the Late Roman fortress at Capidava, in A. Măgureanu / E. Gáll (eds.), Between the steppe and the empire. Archaeological studies in honour of Radu

class, a popular military dress accessory in *barbaricum* as well as in the frontier region, strengthens the hypothesis that barbarians were often recruited to defend the Byzantine frontier.[110] Two “barbaric” imitations after Early Byzantine coins found at Capidava add several nuances to the picture presented by the archaeological evidence. One is an imitation of a *follis* of Justin I (Nicomedia) found at the ancient docks, while the second was found inside the fortress and copies a *follis* of the type in circulation between 512 and 538.[111] Not enough is known about this class of imitations, although it can be speculated that they were issued by the Gepids at Sirmium. Indeed, many were found in the Danube region of Moesia Prima and Dacia Ripensis, but also in the heartland of the Thracian diocese.[112] Such imitations reached Capidava through the circulation of goods along the frontier downstream from Sirmium to the Delta and perhaps in the hands of “barbarians” like the Herules and the Antes settled by Justinian in Northern Illyricum and Northern Thracia, respectively.[113]

As a case study, the analysis of the coin finds at Capidava exemplifies the way numismatic evidence can become the focal point of a narrative relying on

---

Harhoiu at 65th anniversary. Bucharest 2010, 211 – 223; F. Topoleanu / E. S. Teodor, Handmade pottery from Halmyris and its cultural context. *Peuce* 7 (2009) 347 – 360; D. Vîlceanu / A. Barnea, Ceramica lucrată cu mîna din aşezarea romano-bizantină de la Piatra Frecăţei (sec. VI e. n.). *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie* 26 (1975) 209 – 218; M. Comșa, La province de la Scythie Mineure (Dobroudja) et les Slaves pendant les VI–VII ss., in V.V. Sedov (ed.), История и культура древних и средневековых славян. Moscow 1999, 301 – 313.

110 Covacef, Accesorii vestimentare (as footnote 78 above), 100, no. I.2.2; A. Madgearu, The Sucidava type of buckles and the relations between the Late Roman Empire and the barbarians in the 6th century. *Arheologia Moldovei* 21 (1998) 217 – 222.

111 Gandila, Early Byzantine (as footnote 53 above), 114, no. 31. The second coin is a recent find from the 2015 campaign.

112 I. Iurukova, Imitations barbares de monnaies de bronze byzantines du VIe siècle. *Byzantinoslavica* 30 (1969) 83 – 87; D. Gaj-Popović, The appearance of the barbarized folises (folles) in the 6th century in the Balkan Peninsula. *Balcanoslavica* 2 (1973) 95 – 100; D. Vladimirova-Aladžova, Оште за барбарските имитации в монетното обраштение през VI век. *Numizmatika i Sfragistika* 5/1 (1998) 70 – 75. Some 40 imitations were found in the provinces of Thracia and Haemimontus, mostly following Justin I prototypes; A. Tenchova, Beobachtung der Münzzirkulation am Mittellauf des Maritzaflusses im 6.–7. Jahrhundert, paper at the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Sofia, 22 – 27 August 2011.

113 H. Gračanin, Gepidi, Heruli, Langobardi i južna Panonija. *Scrinia slavonica* 7 (2007) 7 – 64; A. Sarantis, The Justinianic Herules: from allied barbarians to Roman provincials, in Curta (ed.), Neglected barbarians (as footnote 108 above), 361 – 402; V. Ivanišević / M. Kazanski, Герулы Юстиниана в Северном Иллирикуме и их археологические следы. *Stratum+* 5 (2010) 141 – 157; G. Kardaras, The Byzantine-Antic treaty (545/46 AD) and the defense of the Scythia Minor. *Byzantinoslavica* 58 (2010) 74 – 85.

archaeological and literary sources. While coins may not answer any broad historical questions by themselves, they have much to offer when used in conjunction with other types of evidence. Indeed, coins can prove useful beyond their function as dating device and can transcend the traditional preoccupations of numismatists who are often concerned with metrology, die-studies, stylistic detail, frequency, and the exchange rate between metals and denominations. Depending on the unit of analysis – town, fortress, village or an entire region – the research questions may change but the numismatic evidence can act as a connective tissue and form the basis of a multifaceted discussion in time and space.

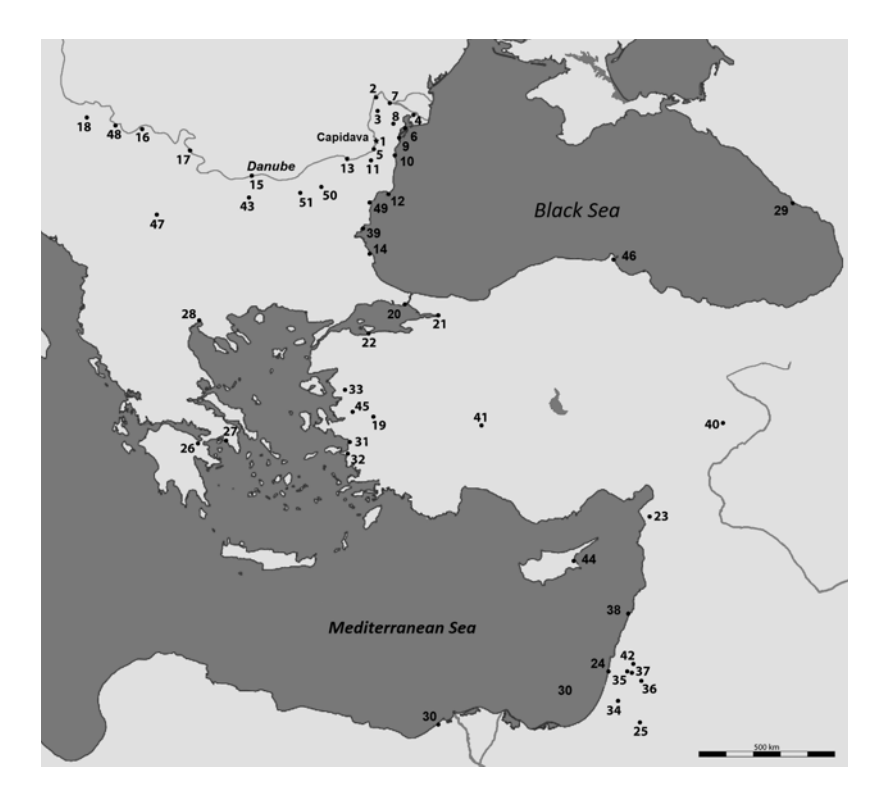


Fig. 3. Early Byzantine settlements mentioned in the text: l. CAPIDAVA; 2. Dinogetia; 3. Beroe; 4. Halmyris; 5. Axiopolis; 6. Argamum; 7. Noviodunum; 8. Ibida; 9. Histria; 10. Tomis; 11. Adamclisi; 12. Acres; 13 Durostorum; 14. Agathopolis; 15. Sucidava; 16. Viminacium; 17. Aquis; 18. Sirmium; 19. Sardis; 20. Constantinople; 21. Nicomedia; 22. Cyzicus; 23. Antioch; 24. Caesarea Maritima; 25. El Lejjūn; 26. Corinth; 27. Athens; 28. Thessalonica; 29. Pityus; 30. Alexandria; 31. Ephesus; 32. Priene; 33. Pergamum; 34. Jerusalem; 35. Scythopolis; 36. Gerasa; 37. Pella; 38. Berytus; 39. Mesembria; 40. Melitene; 41. Pisidian Antioch; 42. Hammat Gader; 43. Sadovets; 44. Salamis; 45. Manisa; 46. Sinope; 47. Justiniana Prima; 48. Singidunum; 49. Odessos; 50. Abritus; 51. Koprivets.

DOI 10.1515/bz-2018-0006 — BZ 2018; 111(1): 135–156

Fotis Vasileiou

“No one can escape God”. A filicidal beneficial tale from early Byzantium

Abstract: John Moschos includes the story of a female filicide in his Spiritual Meadow. After exploring the authorial self of Moschos, this article discusses the relation between this beneficial story and the biblical book of Jonah on the one hand, and Euripides’ Iphigenia at Aulis and Medea on the other. Finally, the story is examined in the wider framework of the seventh century, in an attempt to understand John Moschos’ viewpoint on his own time.

Adresse: Dr. Fotis Vasileiou, Department of History, Ionian University, I. Theotoki Str. 72, 49100 Corfu, Greece; fvasileiou@ionio.gr

Abba Palladios of the monastery of Lithazomenon used to tell the most amazing stories.[1] He would tell, for example, of Abba Adolas, who lived as an ascetic in the hollow of a towering plane tree;[2] or of a soldier, John, who wore a tunic made of hair and wove large straw bags outside the church of St. Peter whenever he was not on duty in his unit;[3] or of the Jew who was baptized Christian with sand in the desert of Judea.[4] Not all of his stories concerned wondrous events and unusual saints. Abba Palladios also had tales of murderers and criminals to tell. He would recount the story of the murderer who was arrested in the town of Arsenoite and, as he was on his way to be beheaded, a monk followed the procession because “he had to see how he would be decapitated”;[5] or of the

I am grateful to Stephanos Efthymiadis for his insights. I also would like to thank Alexandros Alexakis and Gavin McDowell for reading and commenting on my paper and Constantine Lerounis for his suggestions. My sincere thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their remarks. All mistakes are my responsibility.

1 For the monastery of Lithazomenon, see J. Gascou, Lithazomenon and St. Peter’s bridge, in K.J. Torjesen / G. Gabra (eds.), *Claremont Coptic Encyclopaedia* V. London 1991, 1467b–1468a, and of the same author, Nécropolis byzantine IVe–VIIe siècles, in J.-Y. Empereur / M.D. Nenna (eds.), Nécropolis 2. *Études Alexandrines*, 7. Cairo 2002, 653–658, esp. 657–658.

2 *Pratum Spirituale* 70 (*PG* 87, 2923).

3 ibid. 73 (*PG* 87, 2926).

4 ibid. 176 (*PG* 87, 304–345).

5 ὡς ὀφείλων ἰδεῖν, πῶς ἀποκεφαλίζεται: *Pratum Spirituale* 71 (*PG* 87, 2921).

slave who, when his master went travelling, tried to murder his wife and child, but was stricken blind.[6] It is therefore no wonder that John Moschos and Sophronios, two travelers who collected tales and paradoxes, frequented the monastery and listened attentively to his stories.[7] Out of 219 chapters of the *Spiritual Meadow* as included in the *Patrologia Graeca* edition, nine are apophthegms and tales of abba Palladios and one tells of Zoilos, a virtuous scribe who was buried in his monastery.[8] Thus, abba Palladios is the most frequently mentioned person in *The Spiritual Meadow* in the version available to us today.

It is true that *The Spiritual Meadow*, the collection of beneficial tales attributed to John Moschos, is one of the most problematic texts that have come down to us from the Byzantine era.[9] Whilst dozens of manuscripts survive, none includes all the stories attributed to the collection's author. The early manuscripts contain different parts of the text, while the copyists revised the stories depending on what they could recall from the oral tradition and the circumstances of their time. As John WORTLEY has aptly noted, "there was not one *Meadow*, but as many *Meadows* as there were 'copies'".[10] Despite the fact that as early as 1947 Norman H. BAYNES had underscored the work's importance for an understanding of the period,[11] modern historians have made very little use of it. Leav-

---

6 *Pratum Spirituale* 75 (*PG* 87, 2928).

7 On John Moschos, see E. MIONI, Jean Moschus. *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 8 (Paris 1972), 632 – 640; A. LOUTH, John Moschus, in A. di Berardino (ed)., Patrology: The Eastern Fathers from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to John of Damascus († 750), trans. A. WALFORD. Cambridge 2006, 301 – 303. On John's relation with Sophronius, see J. CHADWICK, John Moschus and his friend Sophronius the Sophist. *JThS* 25(1974) 41 – 74, and D. KRUEGER, Between monks. Tales of monastic companionship in early Byzantium. *JHS* 20 (2011) esp. 28 – 38. On the *Spiritual Meadow*, see B. Llewellyn IHSSEN, John Moschos' Spiritual Meadow. Authority and autonomy at the end of the antique world. Farnham 2014. On John Moschos' theological views and his position to post-Chalcedon dogmatic controversies, see PH. BOOTH, Crisis of empire. Doctrine and dissent at the end of late antiquity. Berkeley 2014, esp. 90 f.

8 *Pratum Spirituale* 171 (*PG* 87, 3037).

9 On Byzantine beneficial tales, see A. BINGGELI, Collections of edifying stories, in S. Efthymiadis (ed.), The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography. Vol. 2: Genres and Contexts. Farnham 2014, 143 – 159; J. WORTLEY, The repertoire of spiritually beneficial tales (https://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~wortley/index.html); IDEM, The genre of spiritually beneficial tale. *Scripta & eScripta* 89 (2010) 71 – 91. For the textual and editorial problems of *Pratum Spirituale*, see IHSSEN, Meadow (as footnote 7 above) 5 – 17; N.H. BAYNES, The Pratum Spirituale. *OCP* 13 (1947) 404 – 414, also in his: Byzantine studies and other essays. London 1955, 261 – 270; P. PATTENDEN, The text of *Pratum Spirituale*. *JTS* NS 26 (1975) 38 – 54.

10 John Moschos, The Spiritual Meadow (Pratum Spirituale). Introduction, translation and notes by J. WORTLEY, Kalamazoo 1992, xiii.

11 BAYNES, The Pratum Spirituale (as footnote 9 above).

ing aside the editorial problems which are extremely hard to solve – perhaps even unsolvable – we will turn our attention to a particular tale by abba Palladios contained in the *Meadow*, in the belief that it will contribute to our understanding of the intellectual horizon, but also of the ideological and political frame of the early seventh century. We will treat of Chapter 76, which contains the story of Maria, a filicide who received a miraculous punishment.[12] After offering an extensive commentary on the text, it is our intention to place it in the context of its times and attempt to explore the author's perspectives to the social and political conditions of his age.

John Moschos and his text

> Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ἡμῖν ὁ αὐτὸς Παλλάδιος διηγήσατο, λέγων ὅτι· Ἀκήκοα διηγούμενου τινὸς ναυκλήρου τοιοῦτον, ὅτι· Ἐν μιᾷ ὡς ἔπλεον, ἔχων ἐπιβάτας ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας, ἐλθόντες οὖν εἰς τὸ πέλαγος καὶ πάντων εὐπλοούντων, τῶν μὲν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει, τῶν δὲ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ, τῶν ἄλλων ἀλλαχοῦ, τοῦ ἀνέμου ἐπιτηδείου ὄντος αὐτοῖς, ἡμεῖς μόνοι οὐκ ἠδυνάμεθα πλεῦσαι καὶ ἐμείναμεν ὡς ἐπὶ ἡμέρας μὴ κινηθέντες τοῦ τόπου οὗ ἦμεν. Ἤμεθα οὐν ἐν πολλῇ ἀθυμίᾳ καὶ ἀμηχανίᾳ, τὸ τί ἄρα ἐστὶ τοῦτο. Ἐγὼ ὡς ναύκληρος καὶ ἔχων τὴν φροντίδα τοῦ τε λοιποῦ πλοίου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ πάντων, ἠρξάμην δέεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ περὶ τούτου καὶ ἐν μιᾷ ἔρχεταί μοι φωνὴ ἀοράτως λέγουσα· Βάλε κάτω Μαρίαν, καὶ εὐπλοεῖς. Ἐγὼ δὲ ἐλογιζόμην τί ἂν εἴη τοῦτο, τίς ἐστι Μαρία. Ὡς οὖν ἠπόρουν περὶ τούτου, πάλιν ἔρχεταί μοι φωνή· Εἶπόν σοι· βάλε κάτω Μαρίαν καὶ σώζεσθε. Τότε ἐγὼ ἐσκεψάμην τι τοιοῦτον. Καὶ κράζω ἀθρόως· Μαρία. Οὐ γὰρ ᾔδειν τίς ἡ Μαρία. Ἡ δὲ ἀνακειμένη εἰς τὸ στρῶμα αὐτῆς ὑπήκουσε λέγουσα· Τί κελεύεις, κύριε; Τότε λέγω αὐτῇ· Ποίησον ἀγάπην, ἐλθὲ ἕως ὧδε. Ἡ δὲ ἀναστᾶσα ἦλθεν. Ὡς οὖν ἦλθεν, ἔλαβον αὐτὴν κατιδίαν καὶ λέγω αὐτῇ· Βλέπεις, ἀδελφὴ Μαρία, ποίας ἁμαρτίας ἔχω καὶ δι’ ἐμὲ ὑμεῖς ὅλοι ἕξετε ἀπολέσθαι; Ἡ δὲ στενάξασα μεγάλως, εἶπεν· Ὄντως, κύριέ μου ναύκληρε, ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἁμαρτωλός. Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω αὐτῇ· Γυνή, ποίας ἁμαρτίας ἔχεις; Καὶ αὐτή. Οἴμοι, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία ἣν οὐκ ἔπραξα καὶ διὰ τὰς ἐμὰς ἁμαρτίας ὅλοι μέλλετε ἀπολέσθαι. Τότε διηγήσατό μοι, φησίν, ἡ γυνή τι τοιοῦτον· Ὄντως, κύριε ὦ ναύκληρε, ἐγὼ ἡ ἀθλία ἄνδρα ἔσχον, καὶ δύο παιδία ἐξ αὐτοῦ, τὸ ἕν ὡς ἐννέα χρόνων καὶ τὸ ἄλλο ὡς πέντε ἐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐτελεύτησεν ὁ ἀνήρ μου καὶ ἔμεινα χήρα. Στρατιώτης δὲ πλησίον μου ἔμενε καὶ ἠθέλησα ἵνα λάβῃ με εἰς γυναῖκα. Ἔπεμψα πρὸς αὐτόν τινας. Ὁ δὲ στρατιώτης λέγει· Οὐ λαμβάνω γυναῖκα ἔχουσα τέκνα ἀπὸ ἄλλου ἀνδρός. Τότε ἐγὼ ὡς ἤκουσα ὅτι οὐ θέλει με λαβεῖν διὰ τὰ παιδία, ἅμα δὲ καὶ φιλοῦσα αὐτόν, ἔσφαξα τα δύο μου παιδία ἡ ἄθλια ἐδήλωσα αὐτῷ ὅτι· Ἰδοὺ νῦν οὐδένα ἔχω. Ὡς οὖν ἤκουσεν ὁ στρατιώτης περὶ τῶν παιδίων τὸ τί ἐποίησα, λέγει· Ζῇ Κύριος κατοικῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ, οὐ μὴ λάβω αυτήν. Ὅθεν φοβηθεῖσα μὴ φανερὸν γένηται καὶ ἀποθάνω, ἔφυγον. Ταῦτα ἀκούσας ἐγὼ παρὰ τῆς γυναικός, οὐδὲ οὕτως ἠθέλησα βαλεῖν αὐτὴν εἰς πέλαγος, ἀλλ’ ἐσοφισάμην φησί, καὶ λέγω αὐτῇ· Ἰδοὺ ἐμβαίνω εἰς τὸν κάραβον καὶ ἐὰν περιπατήσῃ τὸ πλοῖον, γίνωσκε γύναι, ὅτι αἱ ἐμαὶ ἁμαρτίαι ἐνεργοῦσιν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ. Τότε,

12 *PG* 87, 2928.

> φησί, φωνῶ τὸν καραβιᾶν λέγων· Ἔσω τὸν κάραβον. Ὡς οὖν κατῆλθον είς τὸν κάραβον, οὐδὲν πλέον, οὔτε τὸ πλοῖον οὔτε ὁ κάραβος ἐκινήθη. Τότε ἀνελθὼν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον, λέγω τῇ γυνακί· Κάτελθε καὶ σύ εἰς τὸν κάραβον. Ἡ δὲ κατῆλθεν καὶ ἅμα τοῦ κατελθεῖν, εὐθὺς ὁ κάραβος βαλὼν ὡς πέντε γύρους, ὀρθόβυθος ἀπῆλθε. Τό δὲ πλοῖον οὕτως ἔπλευσεν, ὅτι διὰ τριῶν ἡμίσεως ἡμερῶν ἠνύσαμεν πλοῦν, ὃν εἴχομεν ποιῆσαι διὰ δεκαπέντε ἡμερῶν.

In an English translation the Chapter 76 reads as follows:[13]

> Abba Palladios also told us that he had heard a shipmaster telling the following story: One day I was sailing along with passengers on board, both men and women. We came out onto the high sea and all the other ships were sailing as well, some to Constantinople, some to Alexandria, others elsewhere. The wind stood well for each of them, but we alone could make no headway. We remained stuck in the same place for fifteen days, not moving at all from where we lay. We were in great distress and despair, not knowing why this should be. As I was the master of the vessel, responsible for both the boat and also for all who sailed in her, I began to pray to God about the matter. One day there came to me a voice of no visible origin saying: "Throw Maria out and you will make good way". As I delayed, trying to work out what this meant and who Maria might be, the voice came to me again: "I told you: throw Maria out and you will be safe". Then I devised the following procedure. I shouted out: "Maria!" – for I had no idea who Maria was. She, however, was lying in her bunk; and she responded, saying: "Why are you calling, sir?" Then I said to her: "Would you please be so kind as to come here?" She got up and came. When she arrived, I took her aside and said to her: "Sister Maria, you see how great my sins are and that because of me you are all going to perish?" She heaved a deep sigh and said: "Oh Shipmaster, sir; in fact it is I who am the sinner". I said to her: "Woman, what sins have you committed?" She said: "I think there is no sin which I have *not* committed; and because of my sins, everybody is going to perish". Then (said the shipmaster) the woman said something like this to me: "In fact, Shipmaster, wretch that I am sir, I had a husband and two children of his fathering. When one of the children was nine years old and the other five, my husband died and I was left a widow. There was a soldier living near me who wished to take me for his wife and I sent some people to <talk to> him. The soldier said he would not take a wife who had children by another man with her. When I learned that he did not want to take me on account of the children, and also because I was very much in love with him, wretch that I am, I slew the children and said to him: 'See, now I have none'. When he heard what I had done with the children, he said: 'As the Lord lives who dwells in heaven, I will not have her'. In my fear that it might become known what I had done and I lose my life, I fled". Even when I heard this from the woman, I still did not want to throw her into the sea just like that. So I equivocated (he said) and told her: "Look, I will get into the dinghy and if the vessel then makes way, know, woman, that it is *my* sins which are at work in this ship. Then (he said) he called for the dinghy and ordered it to be launched. But when he got into it, neither ship nor dinghy made any more headway than before. So he came back on board and said to the woman: "You get down into the dinghy". She did; and as soon as she set foot in the dinghy, it turned round about five times and then sank to the bottom of the deep.

13 I use the translation by J. Wortley, The Spiritual Meadow (as footnote 10 above).

> Then the ship sailed on and in three and a half days we completed a journey which should have taken fifteen days”.

John Moschos records the account of abba Palladios, which in turn reproduces a story he heard from a captain that incorporated Maria’s confession. The systematic invocation of *diegeses* is one of the primary characteristics of the beneficial tales and it should not be regarded as a *topos* devoid of meaning.[14] It relates to the self-image of John Moschos, the way he introduces himself to his readers, the role he claims for himself and the way he conceptualizes his work. By invoking his sources the author ensures the reliability of his work, despite the strange incidents that may be described therein. The recording of truth –rather than mere verisimilitude – was the basic objective of the Early Christian authors. This method, which was developed systematically by Eusebios of Caesarea, was already found in the Gospels.[15] The one and only truth of the one God was projected initially against the “lies” of the pagans and later against the “distortions” of the heretics. In the case currently at hand, the reliability of the narrative appears to be reinforced as it originates with a famous ascetic.

John composed the *Meadow* “for the benefit of those who come across this book”, as he mentions in the preface.[16] Despite the didactic character of this work, John did not appropriate himself as a teacher; this role has been wholly conceded to the narrators of the stories, in this case to abba Palladios, while he himself takes his place on a short stool next to them, as an inquisitive listener and disciple. In doing so, his role does not differ from that of his audience; the texts would be read out loud and the audience would listen to the reader in silence in the way John listened to the elders. The narrative-within-the-narrative understates the importance of the author’s toil and of literary composition diverting our attention to the person whose narrative is transmitted – in this case to abba Palladios, and, through him, to the anonymous shipmaster. Hence, despite the fact that Moschos positions himself inside the narration from the very first sentence (“told *us*”, ἡμῖν) he immediately leaves the spotlight and concedes the stage entirely to his protagonists.

Through an examination of the way in which the hagiographic tradition interprets the poetic production of Romanos the Melodist, the greatest poet of the Byzantine era, and, possibly, an older contemporary of John, we can better

---

14 On *diegesis* in early Christian literature, see C. Rapp, Storytelling as spiritual communication in early Greek hagiography: the use of diegesis. *JECS* 6.3 (1998), 431 – 448.
15 For example, “the man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true”, John 19:35.
16 *Pratum Spirituale* (*PG* 87, 2852).

understand the authorial self Moschos constructs.[17] According to the *Menologion* of Basil II, Romanos "received the gift of [composing] Kontakia" when "the Virgin Mary appeared in his sleep and handed him a tome of paper saying: take the volume and devour it (...) he immediately rose from his sleep, stunned and began rendering glory unto God. After this, he went up the pulpit and began chanting".[18]

The creative contribution of both the poet and the author are understated and the importance of divine inspiration, in the case of Romanos, and of tradition, in the case of John, is foregrounded. Both the poet and the author do not lay claims on literary laurels. On the contrary, they present themselves as mediators between the audience and a truth that surpasses them. Thus, Moschos constructs a literary self in the *Meadow*, which is refracted in the dozens of persons, who are recorded as narrators of their stories. John Moschos is a link in the chain of tradition that had been forged amongst monks and pious believers. He differs in that he narrates in writing what he heard or experienced whilst others transmitted their tales orally.

John Moschos, Jonah and Medea

The narration of abba Palladios, one of the most elaborated in the *Meadow*, incorporates elements from different traditions. Thus, while the motif of the endangered ship because of the sins of one of the passengers derives from the *Book of Jonah*, immobilized ships are found in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and Maria's narrative has many parallels with the legend of Medea, as it was shaped by Euripides. Such a literary fusion is not a unique case in the *Spiritual Meadow*; Marina Detoraki has identified themes that are also used by Herodotus and in the *Arabian Nights*.[19]

---

17 On Romanos the Melodist, see G. Frank, Romanos and the night vigil in the sixth century, in D. Krueger (ed.), Byzantine Christianity. *People's History of Christianity* 3, Minneapolis 2006, 59–78; D. Krueger, Writing and holiness. The practice of authorship in the early Christian East. Philadelphia 2004, 166–169. On the formation of the self in Romanos' kontakia, see Idem, Liturgical subjects. Christian ritual, biblical narrative, and the formation of the self in Byzantium. Philadelphia 2014, 29f.

18 J. Grosdidier de Matons, Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance. Paris 1977, 161–162. On Byzantine narratives of miraculous education, see N. Kalogeras, Education envisioned or the miracle of learning in Byzantium. *Byzantinoslavica* 64 (2006) 111–124 (reprinted in *ZAC* 13, 2010, 513–523).

19 M. Detorake, Τὸ δακτυλίδι τοῦ Πολυκράτη: Ἡ περιπέτεια ἑνὸς μύθου. *Palimpseston* 17 (2000) 105–118.

The story of Jonah, the Old-Testament prophet who attempted to escape the presence of God, was popular not only among Jews, but also among Christians. Many theologians and Fathers of the Church interpreted the fact that he remained for three days in the belly of a whale before he was spitted out on the shore safe and sound, as a prefiguration of the descent to Hell and the rising of Christ.[20] Chapter 76 lacks any Christ-like characters, the similarities and the differences though between the two narrations are telling:

Book of Jonah	**Chapter 76 of *The Spiritual Meadow***
Πνεῦμα μέγα /κλείδων μέγας (1.4)	ἐπὶ ἡμέρας μὴ κινηθέντες
ἐφοβήθησαν οἱ ναυτικοὶ (1.5)	ἐν πολλῇ ἀθυμίᾳ καὶ ἀμηχανίᾳ
ἀνεβόησεν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν θεὸν αὐτοῦ (1.5)	ἠρξάμην δέεσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐκάθευδε καὶ ἐῤῥεγχε (1.5)	ἡ δὲ ἀνακειμένη εἰς τὸ στρῶμα αὐτῆς
Ὁ πρωρεὺς (1.6)	ναύκληρος
ἄρατε καὶ ἐμβάλετέ με εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ κοπάσει ἡ θάλασσα ἀφ’ ὑμῶν (1.12)	Βάλε κάτω Μαρίαν καὶ εὐπλοεῖς
ἔβαλον Ἰωνᾶν καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν κι ἔστη ἡ θάλασσα ἐκ του σάλου αὐτῆς (1.15)	Ἡ δὲ κατῆλθεν καὶ ἅμα τοῦ κατελθεῖν (…) τό δὲ πλοῖον οὕτως ἔπλευσεν.

John Moschos did not use the famous whale that swallowed Jonah in his tale, yet he follows the Biblical narration to set the scene. Moreover, he changes the angle the story is being told from; while the Bible focuses on the passenger who is responsible for the adversity, Moschos put in the centre of his the captain, a man who stands in a middle moral ground, since he was not saintly, like abba Palladios, or sinful, like Mary, and he struggles to understand what really was happening.

Filicide for a modern reader (and perhaps not just the modern reader), is inextricably intertwined with the Euripides’ take on Medea. Nevertheless, the motif of filicide is universal and more primeval than the euripidean play. At any rate, the murder of Jason’s children by their mother is Euripides’ invention; in earlier versions of the myth, Medea was responsible for the dismemberment of her

20 On this subject, see S. Davis, Jonah in early Christian art: allegorical exegesis and the Roman funerary context. *Australian Religion Studies Review* 13.1 (2000), 72–83; H.W. Basser, What makes exegesis either Christian or Jewish? in L. DiTommaso / L. Turcescu (eds), The reception and interpretation of the Bible in late antiquity. Proceedings of the Montreal Colloquium in honor of Charles Kannengiesser, 11–13 October 2006. Leiden/Boston 2006, 39–40.

brother and the murder of Pelias, but her children were sacrificed by the Corinthians.[21] Filicide, nonetheless, is a frequent occurrence in Greek mythology; it forms part of cosmogonic myths, as for example the myth about Uranus, Gaia and Cronus; it appears at the beginning of the Trojan War, in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, as well as in the Oedipus myth.[22] The Bible also includes filicidal stories, the best known example being the Abraham and Isaac story, and also Gothic, Slavic and, Indian myths incorporate this motif. Fairy tales about witches that remain popular today, such as *Hansel and Gretel*, derive their origins from such traditions. But even in our own times, there are various works of art engaging with this subject and the character of Medea in particular, including Pasolini's adaptation of Euripides' play, the "Medea" of Loudovikos of Anogeia, a well-known modern Greek song telling the story of an unmarried young woman, or the filicidal fantasy of the character of Carrie Mathison in the popular television series *Homeland*.[23]

The Byzantines were not unfamiliar with the tragic poet and his plays either. A number of his works were used as school textbooks throughout the Byzantine period; his verse was copied and read, and would decorate other texts or inspire poets who were trying to imitate his style.[24] Moreover, the students of rhetorical schools composed soliloquies based on the main characters of his tragedies, in order to practice in *ethopoeia*. In such an *ethopoeia* by Libanios, Medea explains

---

21 On Euripides' innovations, see inter alios D.J. Mastronarde, Euripides: Medea. Cambridge 2002, 50 – 57; A. Moreau, Le mythe de Jason et Médée: le va-nu-pied et la sorcière. Paris 1994, 101 – 113; E.A. McDermott, Euripides' Medea. The incarnation of disorder. London 1989, 9 – 24.

22 According to the Greek myth, King Laios exposed his newborn son to die. This original cause of the Oedipal sufferings was overlooked by Freud, who fails to "establish the link between cause and effect", according to D. Bloch, "So the witch won't eat me": fantasy and the child's fear of infanticide. Oxford 1978, 9.

23 For filicide in literature, art, and fairy tales, see L. Corti, The myth of Medea and the murder of children. London 1998; and M.A. Abate, Bloody murder. The homicide tradition in children's literature. Baltimore 2013.

24 For a survey of Byzantine education, see A. Markopoulos, Education, in E. Jeffreys / J. Haldon / R. Cormack (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies. Oxford 2008, 785 – 795. For the use of Euripides' plays as textbooks in Byzantium, see R. Cribiore, The grammarian's choice: the popularity of Euripides' Phoenissae in Hellenistic and Roman education, in Y. Lee Too (ed.), Education in Greek and Roman antiquity. Leiden 2001, 241 – 259. For Euripides' position in Byzantine culture, see the classic work of N.G. Wilson, Scholars of Byzantium. London 1983, as well as B. Baldwin, Euripides in Byzantium, in C.J.R.C. Cousland / J.R. Hume (eds.), The play of texts and fragments. Essays in honor of Martin Cropp. Leiden/Boston 2009, 433 – 443.

the reasons which impel her to kill her children.[25] Thus, Moschos' familiarity with the tragic heroine is due to the popularity of Euripides and his tragic heroine, but also may indicate his secular education.

As modern research has shown, the myths and legends that take filicide as their theme echo children's fears of adults and at the same time reflect the unspoken violence exerted on children. More specifically, in the period in which our story unfolds, the ancient Roman ideal of *patria potestas*, which gave the *paterfamilias* a right of life and death (*ius vitae ac necis*) over his children, had been rendered obsolete.[26] Furthermore, the views of the Church that, from the very beginning, opposed infant exposure had been incorporated into state law.[27] However, corporal punishment not only permitted, but was even recommended by Christian and non-Christian moralists as an appropriate educational method.[28] The problem lies, on the one hand, in the blanket silence of the sources on issues of everyday violence, since these were taken for granted and seen as trivial and therefore unworthy of being recorded, and, on the other, in the willful omission of child abuse or even murder. Thus, stories like the one we are about to examine enable us to seek the contours, even though indirectly, of a social reality that, consciously or unconsciously, eludes the sources of the time.

---

25 Τίνας ἂν εἴποι λόγους Μήδεια μέλλουσα ἀποσφάττειν τοὺς ἑαυτῆς παῖδας; in R. Foerster (ed.), Libanii opera VIII. Leipzig 1915 (repr. 1963), 372 – 76; Engl. translation in C. A. Gibson (trans.), Libanius's Progymnasmata: model exercises in Greek prose composition and rhetoric. *Writings from the Greco-Roman World*, 27. Atlanta 2008, 356 – 361. For *ethopoeia*, see R. Webb, The progymnasmata as practice, in Lee Too (ed.), Education (as footnote 24 above) 289 – 316. Also, see E. Amato / J. Schamp (eds.), Ἠθοποιΐα. La représentation de caractères entre fiction scolaire et réalité vivante à l'époque impériale et tardive. Salerno 2005, esp. the contributions of B. Schouler, L'éthopée chez Libanios ou l'évasion esthétique (79 – 92), and G. Ventrella, Libanio e l'etopea Oepragmatica: la dolorosa auto-esortazione di Medea (112 – 122). On *Medea's* popularity in the Middle Ages, see R. Morse, The medieval Medea. Cambridge 1996, and C. E. Leglu, A new Medea in late medieval French narratives, in H. Bartel / A. Simon (eds.), Unbinding Medea: interdisciplinary approaches to a classical myth from antiquity to the 21st century. Oxford 2010, 68 – 79.

26 On *patria potestas*, see. R.P. Saller, Patriarchy, property and death in the Roman family. Cambridge 1994, 102 – 131, as well as his article: Patria potestas and the stereotype of the Roman family. *Continuity and Change* 1 (1986) 7 – 22; A. Arjava, Paternal power in late antiquity. *JRS* 88 (1998) 147 – 165.

27 For Christian views on children and childhood, see O. M. Bakke, When children became people. The birth of childhood in early Christianity. Minneapolis 2005.

28 On corporal punishment, see R. P. Saller, Corporal punishment, authority, and obedience in the Roman household, in B. Rawson (ed.), Marriage, divorce, and children in ancient Rome. Oxford 1991, 144 – 165, and C. Laes, Children in the Roman empire. Outsiders within. Cambridge 2011, 137 – 147.

The narrative begins with a strange event: a ship is immobilized in the sea whilst others continue their course. The motif of the unmoving ship is also the inciting incident in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*. There, the Greeks are hopelessly waiting for a favorable wind in order to begin their voyage towards Troy, and Agamemnon is compelled to ask an oracle from Kalchas the Seer. The latter prophesied that the commander-in-chief must sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, in order to wash away an older affront to Artemis. This marks the beginning of Agamemnon's hesitation and his doubts over the proper course of action as he did not want to waste her. At the same time, the troops and the other generals put a lot of pressure on him, as they wanted to carry on with the campaign.[29]

Feelings of despondency and helplessness are also aroused in the passengers of the endangered ships in the *Meadow*, and in the *Book of Jonah*. In the Biblical story everyone, except the prophet, started praying, and this collective action was considered essential for achieving salvation. In the *Meadow* though, these feelings are the only reaction of the passengers mentioned. From that point on, the action takes place between the shipmaster, Maria, and the incorporeal third party, the supernatural force that puts the action in motion. The captain did not have to approach a seer or prophet, like Agamemnon, nor did he have to cast lots, as the mariners in the *Book of Jonah* have done, in order to ascertain the will of the Almighty (1.7). God-fearing as he was, he kneels himself and prays for an answer. The Christian God was personal and needed no mediation. Everyone may address Him.

The answer came promptly: an incorporeal voice asked him to throw Maria out so that the rest may be saved. The sacrifice of a woman so that the voyage may be continued, a motif that Euripides used in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, was repeated here with two important differences. Whilst the captain confessed his own sinfulness and nothing casts a doubt on his confession, he was not the one responsible for the ship's immobilization. Furthermore, Maria was not the innocent girl who was sacrificed in order to atone for the errors of someone else. She was guilty and her punishment was required. A personal God also entailed personal responsibility and punishment.

Two elements are characteristic of the shipmaster's behavior from this point on: First, his sense of responsibility for the passengers and the goods his vessel carried, this arose not only from his position, but also from an awareness of his

29 On the character of Agamemnon in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, see H. Siegel, Agamemnon in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*. *Hermes* 109 (1981) 257 – 265; S.E. Lawrence, *Iphigenia at Aulis:* characterization and psychology in Euripides. *Ramus* 17 (1988) 91 – 109; R. Aélion, Euripide, héritier d'Eschyle. Paris 1983, 340 – 341.

own sinfulness. The second element is his reluctance to obey the invisible voice, which was reminiscent of the equivocal attitude of the commander-in-chief of the Achaeans and the mariners in Jonah's story, who unsuccessfully tried to get to land to leave Jonah there. This may be ascribed to his inability to discern whether the voice was angelic or demonic, even though such a dilemma is not explicitly articulated in our story. It may also originate in the unwillingness of persons of the middle and lower classes to hand over criminals to the authorities, an attitude that is present in other hagiographical texts.[30]

At this point, Maria made her appearance. The first time she is brought in, lying on the mattress, alone and quiet, is reminiscent of Jonah, who "was gone down into the hold of the ship, and was asleep and snored" (1.5). The similarities though with the prophet end here. In an unexpected turn, Mary would prove to be a Christian variation of Medea, and as the narrative unfolds, the parallels between her and the terrifying witch from Colchis would become more obvious.

Maria is introduced as a widow with children, a situation shared by many women of her time.[31] The mortality rate in Antiquity and the Middle Ages was much higher, and the age difference between the spouses was conducive to men dying first. Particularly in the times of John Moschos, the mortality rate was even higher due to the plague which was still taking a severe toll on the Eastern provinces and the continuing hostilities between Byzantium and Persia.[32] Therefore, the presence of widows and orphans was frequent in society, but also in Christian literature and especially in the beneficial tales, where individuals from weaker population groups loom large in the narrative.[33]

While a widow, Maria fell in love with a soldier who was living in her neighborhood and sent him matchmakers. The second marriage was anything but un-

---

30 On this attitude in edifying stories, see S. Efthymiadis, A day and ten months in the life of a lonely bachelor: the other Byzantium in *Miracula S. Artemii* 18 and 22. *DOP* 58 (2004), esp. 7 – 8.

31 See W. Scheidel, The demographic background, in S.R. Hübner / D.M. Ratzan (ed.), Growing up fatherless in antiquity. Cambridge, 2009, 31 – 40, and R.P. Saller, Patriarchy, (as footnote 26 above) 43 – 69.

32 The plague of Justinian, one of the deadliest pandemics in history, continued to strike even in the beginning of the eighth century: P. Horden, Mediterranean plague in the age of Justinian, in M. Maas (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian. Cambridge 2006, 134 – 160. For different aspects on the plague, see L.K. Littlewood (ed.), Plague and the end of antiquity. Cambridge 2007.

33 On widows and orphans in early hagiography, see F. Vasileiou, The death of the father in late antique Christian literature, in S. Tougher / L. Brubaker (eds.), Approaches to the Byzantine family. *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies*, 14. Farnham 2013, 69 – 83.

usual, especially for younger women, and the Church that frowned upon such an arrangement, did not forbid it.[34] The fact that Maria sent herself a matchmaker to the master of her heart may indicate, in the context of a beneficial tale, that her fervor eventually was becoming a destructive force.

As in Euripides' work, the dramatic events were sparked by the man's arrogant and reckless words.[35] Jason refused to acknowledge the beneficial acts of Medea and ascribed them to Aphrodite and Eros. He presented himself as invulnerable to the arrows of the god and inscribed the erotic passion and its effects, the children, to the weaknesses of Medea.[36] Finally, he removed the children from the vital interests of their mother and framed them exclusively in his own personal ambition, sealing in this way their fate.[37] The soldier rejected Maria's proposal in a similarly reckless manner, avoiding responsibility for the rejection and instead passing the burden of responsibility to the children. This statement seems to function for Maria as a challenge to prove her feelings. Thus, whilst Medea committed murder out of hatred and a desire to take revenge on her disloyal husband, Maria kills in order to affirm her love and consummate it.[38] In Euripides' tragedy the children are the symbol of erotic self-offering that led their mother to humiliation.[39] In the *Meadow*, they represent an embodied ascetic rule that compels Maria to abstinence. They form an obstacle she must overcome in order to experience sexual pleasures. In Euripides, love and hatred follow each other and become intertwined creating the complex image of Medea. In Moschos things are simpler: Love and the seeking of copulation are nothing more than a destructive passion that leads humans to deadly sin.

---

34 On second marriage, see G. Nathan, The family in late antiquity. The rise of Christianity and the endurance of tradition. New York 2000, esp. 116 – 128; J. Meyendorff, Christian marriage in Byzantium: the canonical and liturgical tradition. *DOP* 44 (1990) 99 – 107; A. Arjava, Women and law in late antiquity. Oxford 1996, 167 – 177.

35 P.E. Easterling, The infanticide in Euripides' *Medea*, in J. Mossman (ed.), Oxford Readings in Classical Studies: Euripides. Oxford 2003, 193. See also C.A.E. Lushnig's commentary of this scene between Medea and Jason, in: Granddaughter of the sun. A study of Euripides' *Medea*. Leiden/Boston 2007, 37 – 55.

36 Euripides, *Medea*, 526 – 530. For a commentary of these verses, see Corti, Myth (as footnote 23 above) 39 – 42.

37 *Medea*, 565 – 567.

38 Ihssen, Authority and Autonomy (as footnote 7 above) 93 – 94, makes a brief comment on Maria in which she attributes the murder to "desperation for financial protection". Such an explanation though, is not inferred from any part of the story. On the contrary Maria's confession is unequivocal: "because I was very much in love with him, wretch that I am, I slew the children".

39 On the importance of children in *Medea*, see Easterling, The Infanticide in Euripides' *Medea* (as footnote 35 above) 193 f.

No reaction on the part of the children is mentioned by the narrator. In Euripides’ play the children are also silent, “but not necessarily unresponsive”, as C. A. E. LUSCHNIG noted.[40] The audience, for example, could hear them screaming while they were being butchered, but the murder of Maria’s sons is merely quoted without being invested with emotional or dramatic intensity. Generally speaking, children rarely make an appearance in the stories attributed to John Moschos, and when they do so, they remain silent and expressionless; even the boy-monk stood quiet and passive throughout the story.[41] On the other hand, filicide is one of the few sins that cannot be forgiven through an ascetic life and repentance, and requires the blood of the perpetrator.[42] Reversely, benefiting a child has the potential to save the most bloodthirsty criminal, as it occurred with Kyriakos “the wolf”, a notorious robber and murderer, who escaped the death penalty because he showed compassion towards newly baptized children.[43] Nevertheless, children in the *Meadow* are little more than extras. This contrasts with the earlier Christian literature, especially the *Passions* of the martyrs, where teenagers and young adults play an important role. St. Barbara, for example, was almost a child.[44] It seems that the time when Christianity was a youth culture had long passed by the time of Moschos.[45] In the beginning of the seventh century, the Church had solidified its position and had been assimilated into the Byzantine power system. It formed part of the establishment and it now addressed adults.

The murder of the children left Maria completely alone. The soldier’s reaction, when he heard of the bloodshed, was unexpected and completely dissimilar to his previous answer. He no longer concealed himself behind plausible pretexts and he prefaced his response with the biblical oath (*Ζῇ Κύριος κατοικῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ*), in order to broaden the gap between him and the woman and her act. Thus, Maria is left alone.

---

40 LUSCHNIG, Granddaughter (as footnote 35 above) 87.

41 A. PAPACONSTANTINOU, Child or monk? An unpublished story attributed to John Moschos in MS Coislin 257. *BASP* 45 (2008) 171 – 184.

42 *Pratum Spirituale* 166 (*PG* 87, 3032 – 33).

43 ibid. 165 (*PG* 87, 3032).

44 For children in Byzantine hagiography, see PH. BASILEIOU, Ποιμένας ἤ τύραννος. Ὁ πατέρας στὴ χριστιανικὴ λογοτεχνία τῆς ὕστερης ἀρχαιότητας. Athens 2013; B. CHEVALLIER-CASEAU, Childhood in Byzantine saints’ lives, in A. Papaconstantinou / A.-M. Talbot (eds.), Becoming Byzantine. Children and childhood in Byzantium. Washington 2009, 127 – 165.

45 On the youth of the fourth century that Christianity inspired to reinvent or even to disrupt tradition, see E. J. WATTS, The final pagan generation. *Transformation of the Classical Heritage*, 53. Oakland 2015, 149 – 165.

Medea fled Corinth after the slaughter; not, however, as a fugitive, but as a *daimon* on the Sun's chariot.[46] She even took the bloodied corpses of her children to bury them herself, depriving Jason of this last right. By presenting a filicide aloft the *machina* prophesying the future and instituting festivities in honor of Hera Akraia, Euripides revealed to his audience the dark aspect of the traditional values of honor and heroism, as well as the nature of the archaic cults.[47] At the same time, the apotheotic flight of Medea with the assistance of the Sun, in a way that surpasses human reason and ability, vindicates the emotions she felt: wrath, hatred and the desire to avenge herself along with the act itself. In other words, the final appearance of Medea affirmed a world where dark passion and irrational crime can be accommodated to the extent that they originate with a person possessing dark, irrational and superhuman power.

The world of Maria is completely different. The crime was not committed because of a supernatural power but due to her weakness. Her absolute submission to her passions, ultimately, rendered her inhuman. Contrary to other sinful heroines in the early hagiography, like the notorious Mary of Egypt or Pelagia of Antioch, Maria did not repent, nor did she ask for forgiveness.[48] She hid the corpses of her children and abandoned her house furtively, before her crime became known and judicial proceedings would be initiated against her. Hence she boarded a ship. Sea in the *Meadow*, and in Byzantine literature in general, is hardly an idyllic landscape, but rather a dangerous intermediary area, a wasteland the travelers have to transverse in order to reach their destination. As water and food supplies are exhausted the travelers face hunger and thirst, and the sea

---

46 On Medea as a god, see L. HATZICHRONOGLOU, Medea: woman or fiend?, in M. DeForest (ed.), Woman's power, man's game. Essays on classical antiquity in honor of Joy C. King. Wauconda 1993, 178 – 193; also LUSCHING, Granddaughter (as footnote 35 above) 63 – 84. On the use of *machina* and what this brings to the character of Medea, see also M.P. CUNNINGHAM, Medea ΑΠΟ ΜΗΧΑΝΗΣ. *Classical Phililogy* 45 (1954) 151 – 160; E. SCHLESINGER, On Euripides Medea, in E. Segal (ed.), Euripides: a collection of critical essays. New Jersey 1968, 88 – 89; P. PUCCI, The violence of pity in Euripides' *Medea*. Ithaca/London 1980, 158 – 159.

47 EASTERLING, Infanticide (as footnote 35 above) 187 – 200, esp. 194 – 196, and LUSCHING, Granddaughter (as footnote 35 above) 65.

48 On sinful women in early Byzantine hagiography, see V. BURRUS, The sex lives of saints. An erotics of ancient hagiography. Philadelphia 2004, 128 – 159; L.L. COON, Sacred fictions. Holy women and hagiography in late antiquity. Philadelphia 1997, 71 – 94. On the value of repentance in early Christianity, see A.C. TORRANCE, Repentance in late antiquity: eastern asceticism and the framing of the Christian life c. 400 – 650 CE. Oxford 2012; and I.L.E. RAMELLI, Forgiveness in patristic philosophy: the importance of repentance and the centrality of grace, in C.L. Griswold / D. Konstan (eds.), Ancient forgiveness: classical, Judaic, and Christian. Cambridge 2012, 195 – 215.

seems more like a watery desert.[49] Whilst the desert land became a city by the ascetics, the sea remained primitive and wild. The seafarers are at the mercy of forces that surpass mankind, and hence it is useful to travel alongside an ascetic[50] or with a captain who is pious and keeps the fasts,[51] that is to say with someone who may address God in *parrhesia*.[52] And, of course, everyone is in mortal danger if one of his fellow-travelers is an unrepentant sinner.[53]

Maria managed to escape her homeland, but she was trapped in the open sea, on a ship, where "der irdische Raum mit dem Jenseits trifft".[54] There she was apprehended and condemned, once her condemnation was demanded. Her end is the opposite of that of Medea: she sank into the deep while Medea was elevated. She vanished into the bottom of the watery desert, whilst Medea ended up in Athens. In the *Meadow*, the bodies of holy hermits are miraculously restored to the community;[55] by contrast, the body of Maria was condemned to eternal exile.[56] The world, which according to Gregory of Nyssa reflects the attributes of its creator, seems unable to tolerate her.[57]

49 *Pratum Spirituale* 173 (*PG* 87, 2925) and 174 (*PG* 87, 2925–28).
50 ibid. 173 (*PG* 87, 2925).
51 ibid. 174 (*PG* 87, 2925–28).
52 On *parrhesia*, see C. Rapp, Holy bishops in late antiquity. The nature of Christian leadership in an age of transition. Berkeley 2005, 260–273; P. Brown, Power and persuasion in late antiquity: towards a Christian empire. Madison 1992, 61–70.
53 For Byzantine perceptions of the sea, see V. Della Dora, Landscape, nature, and the sacred in Byzantium. Cambridge 2016, 231f; G.T. Dennis, Perils of the deep, in C. Sode / S. Takács (eds.), Novum Millennium. Studies in Byzantine history and culture in honor of Paul Speck (Aldershot 2000), 65–74; M. Mullett, In peril on the sea: travel genres and the unexpected, in R. Macrides (ed.), Travel in the Byzantine world. Aldershot 2002, 259–284; S. Efthymiadis, The sea as topos and as original narrative in middle and late Byzantine hagiography, in K. Jaspert / M. di Branco (eds.), Ein Meer und seine Heiligen. Paderborn 2017, 93–105.
54 M. Kulhánková, Zwischen Wüste und Welt. Die Konstruktion des Raumes in den byzantinischen erbaulichen Erzählungen. *BZ* 108 (2015) 715–733: 731.
55 For example, see *Pratum Spirituale* 84 (*PG* 87, 2941); ibid. 87 (*PG* 87, 2943–44); ibid. 92 (*PG* 87, 2949–50).
56 S.C. Dirkse, The great mystery: death, memory, and the archiving of monastic culture in late antique religious tales. Diss. to the Department of Classics, Harvard University, Cambridge/Mass. 2015, 90–92.
57 On Gregory of Nyssa's perception of evil in the world, see L.F. Mateo-Seco, Creation; and A. A. Mosshammer, Evil, in L.F. Mateo-Seco / G. Maspero, The Brill Dictionary of Gregory of Nyssa. Leiden/Boston 2010, 183–190 and 325–330; also J. Zachhuber, Human nature in Gregory of Nyssa. Philosophical background and theological significance. Leiden/Boston/Köln 2000, 163f.

Desire in the *Meadow*

Sexuality and the technologies to moderate it feature fairly frequently in the *Meadow*. Complete abstinence from any sexual activity was considered a major objective of Christian asceticism, and it was of critical importance for every ascetic to achieve it. Most stories on this issue furnish accounts of monks who experienced intense desire for corporeal pleasure, decided to succumb, but at the very last moment they managed to preserve their lifestyle in a miraculous or paradoxical way: Konon the Cilician, for example, who was in charge of baptisms in the Monastery of St. Sabas, ceased being tempted by the female body when St. John the Baptist "stripped him of his clothes and three times made the sign of the cross beneath his navel";[58] a monk from the community of Penthoukla "went to Jericho to satisfy his desires. Just as he was entering the den of fornication, he was suddenly afflicted with leprosy all over";[59] Elias the Grazer had lewd thoughts for a female hermit who lived nearby, but when he left his cave to seek her, he was stricken with an apocalyptic vision.[60]

The world of the *Meadow* is a man's world comprised mainly of ascetics whose virtue is in constant danger. Nevertheless, women here are not demonic or salacious creatures who want to destroy them.[61] On the contrary, there are stories in which the teaching of a prudent woman saves the monk from demonic desire. For example, in Chapter 204, "a devout woman who feared the Lord" (γυνὴ εὐλαβὴς καὶ φοβουμένη τὸν Κύριον) offers medical care to an ascetic who had been bitten by a snake and at the same time cured the thoughts the devil had sown in him for her.[62]

There are two narratives, though, in which the problem of sexual desire concerns the laity. In Chapter 60, the devil instilled longing for a woman who was leading a virgin life in her own home in a young inhabitant of Alexandria.[63]

---

58 *Pratum Spirituale* 3 (*PG* 87, 2853 – 61).
59 ibid. 14 (*PG* 87, 2861).
60 ibid. 19 (*PG* 87, 2865 – 67). On apocalyptic visions, see F. Flannery, Dreams and visions in early Jewish and early Christian apocalypses and apocalypticism, in J. J. Collins (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature. Oxford 2014, 104 – 120.
61 For example see V.25, V.26, V.27, V. 28, V.41, V.54, in J.-C. Guy, Les Apophtegmes des Pères: collection systématique, vol. 1. *SC*, 387. Paris 1993; also, D. Brakke, Demons and the making of the monk: spiritual combat in early Christianity. Cambridge 2006.
62 *Pratum Spirituale* 204 (*PG* 87, 3093 – 95).
63 On female domestic asceticism, see P. Rousseau, The pious household and the virgin chorus. Reflections on Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina. *JECS* 13 (2005) 165 – 186; A. M. Silvas, The Asketikon of St Basil the Great. Oxford 2005, 71 – 83; S. A. Harvey, Sacred bonding: moth-

The young man made the life of the woman impossible as he constantly kept watching her house and stalked her. So she called for him and asked him what inspired his desire. When he mentioned her eyes, she gouged them with the shuttle she was holding in her hands.[64] As in the narrative of Maria, we have here a person in love and a person who failed to reciprocate that feeling. In both cases the events were triggered by the man’s reckless words, and the woman resorted to extreme measures. This story concludes with a kind of Christian happy ending for both parties: the virgin is relieved of the nuisance, and the young man “was so filled with remorse that he went away to Scete and distinguished himself as a monk”.[65]

Female desire is at the center of the fifth story edited by Elpidio Mioni.[66] There, a beautiful young widow from Constantinople prayed in the church by saying, “Oh Lord, unsettle me” (Κύριε, τάραξόν με). This is how she explained her prayer to a pious man who was astonished by her plea:

> My master, I had a husband ever since I was a virgin but he passed away some time ago and left me a widow; and now my body has rebelled against me desiring to copulate with a man; this is why I beseech God to humble me, so that I may not come to know a second man.

Her request was granted since “she was seized with high fever, became bed-ridden, and sighed”.

The good-looking widow does not attribute her desire to some plotting of the devil but to a bodily need. Maria too referred to her desire to marry the soldier in a neutral fashion, without ascribing it to demonic influence. Nevertheless, both women emphasized their widowed state, implying that it created a gap in their lives, the regulation of which may lead to the worst sin, in the case of Maria, or admirable virtuousness, as in the case of the graceful Constantinopolitan woman. In other words, desire *per se* is not considered to be a sin in the *Meadow* but rather the way someone chose to deal with it; John the Baptist told Konon the Cicilian that struggle against unclean thoughts, λογισμοί, brings reward to

ers and daughters in early Syriac hagiography. *JECS* 4 (1996) 27 – 56; S. Elm, ‘Virgins of God’. The making of asceticism in late antiquity. Oxford 1994.

64 *Pratum Spirituale* 60 (*PG* 87, 2911 – 14).

65 Hypatia, according to Damascius, applied a similar shock therapy to one of her students, who was in love with her: Damascius, The philosophical history. Text with translation and notes by P. Athanassiadi, Athens 1999, 43 A.

66 E. Mioni, Il Pratum Spirituale di Giovanni Mosco: gli episodi inediti del Cod. Marciano Greco ii.21. *OCP* 17 (1951) 61 – 94.

the fighter.[67] The woman from Constantinople, as the virgin of Alexandria, considers that she will be saved from desire if she eradicated the cause. They think that the affliction of disease or blindness can cure the desire for pleasure. Yet, the widow, unlike the virgin, does not take it upon herself to put commotion in her body, but resigns herself to the will of God.

John Moschos and the seventh century

As it was mentioned earlier, one of the main functions of beneficial tales was to educate and edify their audience.[68] Through these simple tales monks and laymen alike learned how to regulate their passions and cogitations and how to deal with everyday problems. In the *Meadow* we meet ascetics who use constructively apophthegms and beneficial tales, pointing out the proper way to utilize this literature. Thus, in Chapter 55, abba Eirenaeus recounts how he became aware that he had to return to the Scetis, despite the danger of nomadic invasion, when he read a *Gerontikon.*[69] Chapter 212 gives an account of some monks sitting in the garden (παράδεισος) of a monastery reading and discussing the *Sayings*, when one of the lot recounts how he literally imitated the example of an old ascetic he once had read.[70]

The story of Maria contains no examples of asceticism or resistance to temptation. Nevertheless, the author transforms the story of a distraught woman into a parable about the pernicious operation of passions and the omnipresence of God, the gaze of Whom no one may elude. The conviction that God has not abandoned the world but is watching over it very closely, intervening as necessary, rewarding the pious and punishing the sinful, permeates the *Meadow.* Hence,

---

67 *Pratum Spirituale* 3 (*PG* 87, 2853–61).

68 On the educational character of the ascetic literature, see J.-C. Guy, Educational innovation in the desert fathers. *Eastern Churches Review* 6 (1974) 44–51. More recently, L. Larsen placed the educational function of the ascetic literature in the wider intellectual environment of their time, see: On learning a new alphabet: the sayings of the desert fathers and the monostichs of Menander, in S. Rubenson (ed.), Early monasticism and classical paideia. *Studia Patristica* 55/3 (2013) 59–77; eadem, The *Apophthegmata Patrum* and the Classical Rhetorical Tradition. *Studia Patristica* 39 (2006) 409–416; Eadem, The *Apophthegmata patrum:* rustic rumination or rhetorical recitation? *Meddelanden från Collegium Patristicum Lundense* 22 (2008), 21–31; on the relation to the Greco-Roman Philosophical tradition, see H. Rydell Johnsén, Renunciation, reorientation and guidance: patterns in early monasticism and ancient philosophy, in: Early monasticism and classical paideia (as above) 79–94.

69 *Pratum Spirituale* 55 (*PG* 87, 2909).

70 *Pratum Spirituale* 212 (*PG* 87, 3104).

treasures are unexpectedly revealed to poor people who did not succumb to the temptation to perpetrate illicit deeds due to their impoverishment, whilst the evildoers invariably meet a terrible end.[71] "It is a fact that no evil-doer can escape the notice of God", contemplates John Moschos at the end of Chapter 77 and this idea is present in many stories in the *Meadow*.[72]

This also seems to be the moral of Chapter 43 which records the story of Thalilaios, Bishop of Thessalonike, who was deposed on charges of heresy and idolatry.[73] When he managed to regain his office through bribery, he found a shameful death in the latrine of his own house. However, God in the *Meadow* is not the implacable Judge who monitors the lives of men. Thalilaios was not condemned on account of his original iniquity. "The angel who governed the Thessalonican church (...) together with the great martyr Demetrios" set out only when this unrepentant cleric sought to regain his position by employing illicit means. Divine justice in the *Meadow* is portrayed as tolerant and patient with men and their weaknesses. There is, however, a fragile balance between the Divine tolerance and human sinfulness; providence intervenes in cases of great iniquity, like that of Maria or Thalilaios.

Under the pretext of telling Thalilaios' story, John Moschos launches a rare tirade against the ruling classes. Having been deposed from the diocesan see of Thessaloniki, the bishop took refuge in Constantinople. There he engaged in intrigues and machinations to have himself restored to the bishopric. "For it was at Constantinople that the rulers lived, those of whom Isaiah spoke: *Which justify the wicked for* reward *and take away the righteousness of the righteous man from him*." In a very few words the author paints a picture of the widespread corruption and degeneracy prevalent in the ruling classes of the Empire that oppressed decent citizens, which brings to mind Procopius' criticism to Justinian's administration. A similar judgment can be found in Chapter 78. A grave robber desecrated the tomb of a rich virgin and divested her of her rich garments. Then the girl rose up and rebuked him for his actions: "What is there to be said for humanity when it can stoop to such depths?" she finally exclaimed.[74] Thus she indicated that sin does not only affect the sinner or his victim, but stigmatizes mankind as a whole. On the other side of the argument, lies the story of abba Kyprianos Koukolas: He revealed that when a plague broke out in Caesarea,

---

71 For example, see *Pratum Spirituale* 189 (*PG* 87, 3068 – 69).
72 ibid. 77 (*PG* 87, 2929 – 32).
73 ibid. 43 (*PG* 87, 2895 – 97).
74 ibid. 78 (*PG* 87, 2932 – 36).

God took pity on the inhabitants for the sake of abba Zacharia.[75] As the sin of one person may bring many to perdition, the piety of one can save thousands.

General and rather commonplace judgments of this sort about the world take on great force as they were projected against the tranquility and spirituality of the monasteries and cells, which are at the core of this work. There are instances though where these criticisms reach all the way to the courtyards of the ascetics. When conversation comes to revolve around the ancient heroic anchorites, the comparison with the contemporary monks turns out to be crushing. Abba Alexander the Elder determines that "In the days of our fathers, the virtues of poverty and humility flourished; these days, avarice and pride are in fashion",[76] while the perception of abba Theodoros is similar.[77]

The lamentation of abba George the Recluse that "the Lord is not willing to be placated on our account" is raised against a background of widespread sinfulness and decline. The old man had an apocalyptic vision in which he found himself before a high throne, but the person sitting on it did not deign to listen to him or the thousands who were around him and pleaded. He would not even listen to the woman clad in purple raiment. Abba Anastasios related the vision to John and Sophronios and added: "The next day, Friday, about the ninth hour, there was a severe earthquake which overthrew the cities of the Phoenician coast". The interpretation of abba George for these events was very simple: "Woe are we, brother, for we have no compunction but live heedlessly. I fear we are at the gates <of perdition> and that the wrath of God has overtaken us."[78] In the sermons of abba George, the call to repentance is commingled with apocalyptic visions and chiliastic expectations, thus creating an ideological tool to interpret reality which would become exceedingly popular in the Palestine and Syria of the following period.[79]

In this context the narrative of Maria functions not only as a moral sermon, but also as a parable for the problems the Empire was facing at that time. In any case, the ship that replaced the courtyard of Medea's house as the place in which the story takes place is an ancient symbol of the state. The Byzantine state in that period was shaken by internal political problems (Maurikios was murdered by

---

75 ibid. 132 (*PG* 87, 2935).
76 ibid. 168 (*PG* 87, 3036).
77 ibid. 162 (*PG* 87, 3029).
78 ibid. 50 (*PG* 87, 2905).
79 L. Greisiger, Opening the Gates of the North in 627. War, anti-Byzantine sentiment and apocalyptic expectancy in the Near East prior to the Arab conquest, in W. Brandes / F. Schmieder / R. Voss (eds.), Peoples of the apocalypse. Eschatological beliefs and political scenarios. *Millennium-Studien*, 63. Berlin 2016, 63 – 79.

Phokas, a regime of terror had been instituted and Herakleios led a successful rebellion against it), the ecclesiastical feud, and external dangers as the Persians were advancing in the Eastern provinces, conquering Jerusalem and transferring the Holy Cross to Ctesiphon.[80] This widespread tumult was ascribed by the Byzantines to their own sins. God was punishing them by letting plagues and earthquakes strike while the “barbarians” raid. In Moschos’ tale, the ship’s immobilization is also attributed to the sins of the occupants. What is interesting is that Moschos did not account the leadership as responsible. While the shipmaster’s sinfulness is never in question, a mere widow poses the threat for the vessel and its people. In other words, everyone, even the most insignificant, could bear responsibility for the crisis. Personal sin did not just lead the individual to the eternal punishment after his/her death. It also brought the whole world to destruction. That consensus view contributed to the spread of Christian ethics and the ascetic ideal to the cities of the Empire, especially in the reign of Justinian and after. Thus, the story of Maria, like many others in the *Meadow*, is a call for self-examination and repentance. The difference though is that it does not relate to personal salvation, but rather to the salvation of the community, and by extent to the survival of the Empire.

In 603 or 604, John Moschos and Sophronios left Palestine and resorted to Alexandria, where he continued to collect stories to flesh out his bouquet.[81] Meanwhile, the Persians invaded the eastern territories of Byzantium in order to revenge Maurikios’ death, marking the beginning of a long and merciless war between the two empires. As remote as John’s stories may seem from the war fronts or the imperial court with its plots and intrigues; or, as focused as they appear to the simple and quite lives of the humble ascetics he met, they still were affected by the strong vibes of their times.

The story of Maria is indicative: Short, simple, without rhetorical decoration, speaks of the value of an ascetic virtue, yet connecting seventh century Byzantium with different cultures, and at the same time surreptitiously offering a key to interpret the multi-dimensional crisis. This explanation may seem simple and naïve to us today, but it had the advantage of carrying along the threat of destruction a kind of optimism: God keeps an eye on his people. The shipmaster

---

80 D.M. Olster, The politics of usurpation in the seventh century: rhetoric and revolution in Byzantium. Amsterdam 1993; J.F. Haldon, Byzantium in the seventh century: the transformation of a culture. Cambridge 1997; W.E. Kaegi, Heraclius, emperor of Byzantium. Cambridge / New York, 2003.

81 H. Usener (ed.), Der heilige Tychon. Leipzig 1907, 91–92.

and the seafarers managed to continue their journey safe and sound, even if they had to take difficult decisions.

 DOI 10.1515/bz-2018-0007 — BZ 2018; 111(1): 157–212

II. ABTEILUNG

Manuela De Giorgi, Il Transito della Vergine. Testi e immagini dall'Oriente al Mezzogiorno medievale. *Byzantina Lupiensia*, 1. Spoleto, Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 2016. 198 S., 59 farb. Abb. ISBN 978-88-8609-130-9.

Dieses Buch, zweifellos die Frucht einer langjährigen und intensiven Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema des Marientodes, besteht aus zwei Teilen: in den ersten beiden Kapiteln (S. 5–89) werden die frühen syrischen, koptischen, armenischen, georgischen, äthiopischen, arabischen, griechischen und lateinischen Quellen zum Thema ausführlich und mit großer Sachkenntnis besprochen. In den folgenden Kapiteln (III–VI, S. 91–191) breitet Verf. ein ikonographisches Material aus, das größtenteils dem Süden Italiens angehört. Die im Gegensatz zu den meisten ikonographischen Publikationen unserer Zeit theologisch und textkritisch kenntnisreiche und manchmal etwas weitschweifige Behandlung der Quellen (84 Seiten!) erweckt den Eindruck, als wolle die Verf. eine umfassende Monographie zum Thema Koimesis vorlegen, welche das gesamte byzantinische und provinzialbyzantinische Material berücksichtigt. Das ist aber nicht der Fall, denn im Zentrum der Untersuchung steht Süditalien. Aus den Fußnoten und den Hinweisen auf Parallelen im Text geht hervor, dass Verf. die byzantinischen Koimesis-Darstellungen zwar sehr wohl kennt, aber sie beschränkte sich fast ausschließlich auf die süditalienischen Monumente. Dies führt zu einem Ungleichgewicht zwischen den beiden Kapiteln über die Koimesis-Quellen (5.–9. Jh.) und den ikonographischen Kapiteln mit dem süditalienischen Material, das erst vom späten 11. Jh. an, vor allem aber vom 13. bis zum 15. Jh. bezeugt ist. Es erhebt sich daher die Frage, ob es notwendig war, das frühe Quellenmaterial so ausführlich auszubreiten und inwieweit dieses für die Monumente des späten Mittelalters überhaupt maßgeblich war. Das Verdienst der Verf. ist es, nachgewiesen zu haben, dass die Texte des um 500 entstandenen „discorso di san Giovanni" (Pseudo-Giovanni, 35–38) und der „*transitus romanus*" (G 2) aus der zweiten Hälfte des 6. Jh. in italogriechischen Handschriften (Vat. Gr. 1633) und (Vat. Gr. 1982) des 10./11. Jahrhunderts überliefert sind (38, 128). Somit besteht nicht nur die Möglichkeit, sondern eine Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass gewisse Elemente der süditalienischen Koimesis-Darstellungen direkt frühchristlichen Texten entspringen. Dies stringent zu beweisen, ist ein jedoch heikles Unterfangen, weil den Künstlern im hohen Mittelalter eine vielfältige ikonographische Tradition zur Verfügung stand, auf die sie leichter zurückgreifen konnten als auf Texte.

Die frühen Texte der zweiten Hälfte des 5. und der ersten Hälfte des 6. Jh.s erwähnen Tod und Auferstehung Mariä, nicht aber die Himmelfahrt. Ab der zweiten Hälfte des 6. Jh.s jedoch werden Koimesis und Himmelfahrt Mariens zusammen besprochen. Der Nachweis, dass das Koimesis-Fest von der Kirche dekretiert worden ist, wird einwandfrei nur vom *Liber Pontificalis* geliefert: es war der syrische Papst Sergius (687–701), der die Feste der Verkündigung, der Dormitio und der Geburt Mariens in Rom einrichtete, weil sie ihm aus Syrien wohlvertraut waren. Verf. vermutet mit Recht, dass diese Feste in der östlichen Kirche schon im 6. Jh. eingeführt worden sind. In Ägypten sind Marientod und Himmelfahrt seit dem 6. Jh. gefeiert worden (25).

Aus dem nahöstlichen Bereich hat sich gerade mal ein dem 6. Jh. zuzuweisendes Tonrelief aus Beth-Shean erhalten (fig. 1), auf dem der Marientod dargestellt ist. Dies ist ein Zufallsfund, der im Gegensatz zu den sehr konkreten Texten nur aussagt, dass es in Palästina einen Ort gab, an welchem die Pilger des Marientodes gedenken konnten. Aus dem frühen Mittelalter hat sich außerdem ein Stuckrelief mit der Darstellung der toten Muttergottes erhalten. Ob der Marienkopf aus dem späten 8. Jh. in Disentis (fig. 2) mit Sicherheit einer „Dormitio" angehört, bleibt jedoch hypothetisch. Im Vorspann zu den süditalienischen Koimesisbildern erwähnt Verf. auch ein Medaillon aus Genf (109, fig. 3–4) und eine höchst ungewöhnliche Koimesis in Ihlara in Kappadokien aus der Zeit um 900 (fig. 5), in welcher das Bett Mariens leer ist, womit sehr wahrscheinlich auf ihre Himmelfahrt angespielt wird. Andreas von Kreta redet vom leeren Grab (55). Nur nebenbei sei bemerkt, dass Andreas von Kreta († c. 740) in seiner zweiten Homilie über die Koimesis von Ikonen mit der Koimesis-Darstellung redet (PG 97, 1056 und 1064). Auf diesen war das aus dem Felsen heraus gehauene Grab Mariens im Kedrontal zu sehen. Andreas setzte die Ikone in seiner Predigt als Lehr- und Beweismittel zuhanden der Gläubigen ein. Man darf also mit Koimesis-Ikonen seit dem frühen 8. Jh. rechnen.

Erst auf S. 117 wendet sich Verf. ihrem eigentlichen Thema zu, den süditalienischen Koimesis-Darstellungen. Ausführlich behandelt sie das Koimesisfresko in Miggiano, das sie wohl mit Recht dem späten 11. Jh. zuweist (117–129, fig. 6–15). Der Bildort einer privaten, unterirdischen Grabkapelle sowie die Darstellung von Stiftern machen deutlich, dass die Koimesis hier als ein *ex voto* gedacht war. Der (oder die) Verstorbene sichert sich mit der Koimesis-Darstellung im eigenen Grabraum die Fürbitte der Muttergottes. Da sich im Vordergrund des Bettes Mariens Spuren des Juden Geofonia erhalten haben, dessen Legende vom sog. „*transitus romanus*" (G 2) bereits in der zweiten Hälfte des 6. Jh.s überliefert wird, möchte Verf. eine direkte Beziehung zwischen dem Fresko von Miggiano und diesem Text postulieren (129). Auch „der rapporto privilegiato che Maria ha con l'apostolo/figlio Giovanni nel testo" spricht für diese These, denn „il manoscritto

conservato presso la Biblioteca Vaticana (Cod. Vat. Gr. 1982) è stato riconosciuto come un prodotto italo-greco del XI secolo" (128). Leider erwähnt dieser „*transitus romanus*" die beiden Bischöfe nicht, die sich unter die Apostel gemischt haben. So bleibt hier ein Fragezeichen, aber die These der Verf. ist durchaus erwägenswert.

Die folgende Koimesis gehört bereits dem späten 12. oder dem frühen 13. Jh. an und befand sich an der Westwand der Abteikirche von Cerrate. Ein zweites, hervorragend erhaltenes und sehr qualitätvolles Fresko aus der Mitte des 14. Jh. mit der Darstellung der Koimesis befindet sich an der Nordwand derselben Kirche. Im Buch, das Dionysius Areopagita in Händen hält, liest man eine griechische Inschrift, die auf ein privates Votiv schließen lässt. Wenn diese These richtig ist, war der Stifter des Freskos ein verstorbener Wohltäter des Klosters, der seinen Namen nicht nannte. Im Übrigen ist die Koimesis mit einer Himmelfahrt Mariae verbunden. Dass die Koimesis häufig als *ex voto* gewählt worden ist, zeigt auch ein Relief eines Architravs der chiesa della Confraternità delle Anime (153, fig. 35) aus der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jh., auf dem zwei Mönche als Auftraggeber figurieren. Ursprünglich dürfte das Relief wohl ein Grabmal geschmückt haben.

Unter den campanischen Koimesis-Darstellungen sind vor allem eine Federzeichnung im Codex Casin. 98 (fig. 42) von ca. 1072 und das Fresko in der cripta di Santa Maria in Grotta in Rongolise (fig. 43) aus dem späten 12. Jh. zu nennen. Alle Beurteiler sind sich darin einig, dass in beiden Darstellungen ein byzantinisches Vorbild kopiert worden sein soll, aber damit bleibt die eigentlich künstlerische Essenz auf der Strecke. Die Cassineser Zeichnung ist das Produkt eines glänzenden Zeichners, der sich viel mehr für die Staffelung und Rhythmik der Figuren mit ihren Nimben interessierte als für eine treue Wiedergabe seines angeblich so reinen byzantinischen Vorbildes. Cod. Casin. 98 und Rongolise verbindet die ikonographische Eigenheit, dass Maria nicht auf dem Totenbett, sondern in einem Riefelsarkophag liegt. Sie stirbt also nicht in ihrem Haus in Jerusalem oder Bethlehem, sondern merkwürdigerweise in ihrem Grab. Wie denn? Dafür gab es keinen Text. Dies ist umso erstaunlicher, als zwischen der Zeichnung und dem Fresko mehr als hundert Jahre liegen. Die wichtigste Koimesis-Darstellung Siziliens ist zweifellos das bekannte Mosaik in S. Maria dell'Ammiraglio in Palermo (184, fig. 52). Verf. zitiert zwar den so wichtigen Aufsatz von A. Acconcia Longo (2007), folgt dann aber in ihrer Interpretation ganz Kitzinger. Acconcia Longo erkannte, dass sich das Grab der Mutter Georgs von Antiochien, die im Jahre 1140 in hohem Alter als Nonne verstarb, in S. Maria dell'Ammiraglio befunden haben muss, weil dort im Jahre 1870 ein Fragment ihrer Grabinschrift gefunden wurde. In derselben Kirche wurden die Gräber Georgs und seiner Gemahlin angelegt. Alle drei Gräber waren mit poetischen Grabinschriften versehen, die vom 12. Jh. an bis in die Neuzeit immer wieder kopiert worden sind. Die Koimesis-Darstellung in S. Maria dell'Ammiraglio ist demzufolge wie in den anderen von der Verf. erwähnten

Beispielen (Miggiano etc.) als ein *ex voto* für die in dieser Kirche bestattete Familie des Stifters Georg von Antiochien zu deuten, und nicht als Teil eines nicht vorhandenen Zwölf-Feste-Zyklus.

Interesse verdient schließlich die von M. Andaloro entdeckte „Ikone" der Koimesis im Palazzo Abatellis in Palermo (188 fig. 55), die jedoch wegen ihres Formates (138,5 × 93 cm!), das zudem beschnitten ist, eher als ein Altarbild anzusprechen ist. Verf. schlägt eine Datierung ins mittlere 13. Jh. vor.

M. de Giorgis Verdienst ist es, ein weitgehend unbekanntes Material rund um die deuterobyzantinische Koimesis-Ikonographie Süditaliens umsichtig erforscht und in einem größeren textgeschichtlichen Rahmen aufgrund ausgedehnter Quellenanalysen zugänglich gemacht zu haben.

Prof. Dr. Beat Brenk: via Gregoriana 5, 00187 Roma, Italia; bbrenk@gmx.net

Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I–IV. Recensuerunt anglice verterunt indicibus instruxerunt Michael Featherstone et Juan Signes Codoñer nuper repertis schedis Caroli de Boor adiuvantibus. *CFHB*, 53. Boston/Berlin, De Gruyter 2015. X + 36*+358 p. ISBN 978-1-61451-598-2.

It should be underscored from the start that the much-anticipated critical edition of the four first books of *Theophanes Continuatus* (hereafter *TheophCont*) by Michael Featherstone and Juan Signes Codoñer is a major event in the field of Byzantine studies. The work in question, the historiographic composition *par excellence* of the Macedonian dynasty, which was planned within the milieu of the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (945 – 959) and was at least overseen, if not actually written, by Constantine VII himself, is now complete, critically restored, and at the disposal of researchers. It will be remembered that the current edition of the four books of *TheophCont* was preceded by Ihor Ševčenko's critical edition of the *Life of Basil*, the fifth and by far the best-known book of this great historical work, published posthumously under the supervision of Cyril Mango, by a considerable margin (2011). Of the sixth book of *TheophCont*, which differs both stylistically and structurally from the books that preceded it and has now been proven not to be part of the main body of the work, clearly being a later addition, Featherstone and Signes Codoñer have already announced its critical edition. This will fill a significant gap and pave the way for the definitive evaluation of other historical works of almost equal importance, including the so-called second version of Symeon Logothete's Chronicle. Finally, I will note that the editors made extensive use in their edition – as did Ševčenko

in the *Life of Basil* – of the *Nachlass* of Carl de Boor, who had almost completed his own edition of *TheophCont*, though his undertaking was never published.

The volume reviewed here opens with a Foreword (p. VII–VIII), followed by its Table of Contents (p. IX). Next come the Prolegomena (p. 1*–36*), which contain a number of sections dedicated to key subject areas of direct relevance to the text, such as a reference to the *codex unicus* bearing *TheophCont*, the well-known Vaticanus gr. 167; the division of the work into sections; its sources; its authorship; the principles applied to the current edition; a bibliography, etc. This is followed by the critical edition of the four books of *TheophCont*, which is accompanied by an English translation (p. 1–301). The volume ends with four indexes: an index nominum propriorum (p. 305–328), an index verborum ad res Byzantinas spectantium (p. 329–340), an index grammaticus (p. 341–355), and an index locorum (p. 356–358).[1]

Overall, the reader is left with a positive impression of the new edition of *TheophCont*. The text has been improved in a host of places and is a world apart from the older edition by Bekker (1838), who reproduced Combefis' *editio princeps* (1685) with numerous improvements. It is undoubtedly functional, as is the English translation, which, though it may not employ the admittedly attractive translational acrobatics essayed by Ševčenko who produced an English-language version of the *Life of Basil* as close as possible to the Byzantine original, is comprehensible without becoming simplistic or mechanical – as many such efforts are. On the other hand, the careful reader will note a thread of unexpected cursoriness running through the undertaking, especially in the Prolegomena but at other points, too, which cannot but raise questions. I will now present a selection of critical observations of a general nature which I made as I read through the volume.

In the Prolegomena (1. The Texts in *Vat. Gr.* 167, p. 1*–2*), *TheophCont* is divided into three distinct sections, as it is in the Vatican codex: the first includes the four first books of *TheophCont*, the second the *Life of Basil,* and the third book six. The division is valid, though the argumentation is somewhat brief. But then essentially the same issue is discussed at length in subsection 4 of the Prolegomena, "The Authorship of Texts I–III and the subsequent compilation of Theophanes Continuatus", p. 14*–19*. It may, perhaps, have been preferable to combine the two subsections into one, since there is a good deal of overlap between them. The absence of a description of the hugely significant Vat. gr. 167 in which, as noted above, the *TheophCont* came down to us, is a clear omission (2. The Manuscripts, p. 5*–9*), with the reader referred to the very well-

1 A chapter dedicated to the language of the text would definitely have been welcome.

known paper by S. Serventi, Il Vat. gr. 167, testimone della Continuatio Theophanis, e i marginalia di un anonymo lettore bizantino. *Aevum* 75 (2001) 267–302; and to the description included in Ševčenko's edition of the *Life of Basil.*[2] I appreciate that requiring an additional description of a recently described manuscript could be considered excessive; however, a simple outline of its contents would not have caused any problems, indeed quite the opposite. The analysis of the now well-known, but most definitely important, marginalia of the Vatican codex is extremely lengthy, but useful.

I will not be adding my voice to those who would argue that the treatment of *TheophCont*'s sources, a particularly thorny issue which has generated a vast bibliography, has not received the attention it warrants in the introduction (3. The sources of Text I, p. 10*–13*). The same is largely true of the issue of its authorship, or at least the identity of the person behind the compilation of *TheophCont* in the form in which it has come down to us (4. The Authorship of Texts I–III and the subsequent compilation of Theophanes Continuatus, p. 14*–19*). Here, too, I believe that it would have been preferable to combine these two subsections into one. In relation to *TheophCont*'s sources, in particular, the new edition makes a less than remarkable contribution, even if its editors note, most probably accurately, that "... only very few of the multifarious texts used by the author of Text I have been preserved".[3] On the other hand, Signes Codoñer has already formulated the working hypothesis, now more generally accepted, that both Genesios and *TheophCont* drew their material from what he designates as the 'common source' (*CS), a dossier of sorts compiled within the palace milieu;[4] as a consequence, ascertaining the sources of this dossier becomes a difficult, if not impossible, task. Still, some sources have been identified, like the *Life of Ignatios* or the *Life of the Martyrs of Amorium*, though, generally speaking, their contribution is meagre. As for the issue of the *TheophCont*'s authorship and its contentious links to Genesios,[5] I will recall that Featherstone has made

2 The Manuscripts, 5* note 9. No mention is made of the recent paper by M. A. Kurisheva, К датировке Vat. gr. 167 – древнейшего списка хроники "Продолжателя Феофана", , in B. L. Fonkič (ed.), Специальные исторические дисциплины I. Moskva 2014, 31 – 40, which dates the codex to the latter half of the tenth century, though its criteria are somewhat less than ironclad.

3 3. The sources of Text I, 10*.

4 Ibid. 11*–12*.

5 I note the editors' view that Genesios is a first rather than a family name, as is universally accepted (4. The Authorship of Texts I–III, 14*–15*). However, this view is not well-supported and can easily be disproved. See recently J.-C. Cheynet, Les Génésioi, in Th. Antonopoulou / S. Kotzabassi / M. Loukaki (eds.), Myriobiblos. *BA*, 29. Boston/Berlin/Munich 2015, 71 – 83. The editors, though familiar with this study, chose to make less use of it than it warrants.

strenuous efforts in recent years to prove that none other than Basil Lekapenos was behind the text, especially as an initiator or compiler.[6] While the view is certainly attractive, it is also extremely hard to prove conclusively. For their part, the editors spare no effort in their attempts to link the sixth book of *TheophCont* to Basil Lekapenos, even though this will in essence constitute the subject-matter of their future edition of Book VI. There is a degree of confusion throughout, which is unhelpful to the reader, especially if they are unfamiliar with the various problems besetting Byzantine historiography in the Middle Byzantine period.

The indirect tradition of *TheophCont*, both in Skylitzes – who makes use not of the Vaticanus gr. 167 but of another, as-yet-unknown manuscript superior to it – and in the chronicle of Pseudo-Symeon (10th century), has been studied carefully by the editors, who on this point deserve praise (Reception: John Skylitzes [and Ps-Symeon], p. 20*–26*). The short two-page section which follows on the stemma of *TheophCont* and on its sources is equally interesting (6. Proposed stemma, including sources and adaptations, p. 27*–28*), as is the exposition of the principles that informed the edition (7. The present edition, p. 29*–32*). In contrast, the bibliography (Bibliography, p. 33*–36*) has gaps since, as presented, it clearly sets out to be selective rather than comprehensive. To take one example, it is noteworthy that no mention is made of studies by either P.J. Alexander or R.J.H. Jenkins on *TheophCont*, while contributions by both F. Hirsch and Ševčenko are listed. Moreover, none of the papers dedicated to Basil Lekapenos, who plays such a central role in the Prolegomena – for example, from the older literature, the studies by W.G. Brokkaar, J. Koder and C.M. Mazzucchi and from the more recent, those by L. Bevilacqua – found their way into the bibliography, despite the editors being well acquainted with and making use of them. In addition, the handbook by W. Treadgold, The Middle Byzantine Historians. Basingstoke / New York 2013, is also absent, even though it could have contributed material to the debate, despite the frequently 'personal' views the American Byzantinist proffers on various subjects. The same is true of the older manuals by H. Hunger, A. Karpozilos and A. Kazhdan. Another omission, strangely, is the especially well-regarded doctoral thesis by A. Nemeth, The imperial systematization of the past. Emperor Constantine VII and his excerpts, CEU/Budapest 2010 (https://dsh.ceu.edu/node/15783), which discusses at length issues pertaining directly to *TheophCont*. I shall now list a selection of studies which should have a place in the bibliography: E. Anagnostakes, Οὐκ εἴσιν ἐμὰ τὰ γράμματα. Ιστορία και ιστορίες στον Πορφυρογέννητο. *Sym-*

6 The relevant bibliography is listed both in this chapter and in the bibliography which accompanies the volume (p. 33*–36*).

meikta 13 (1999) 97–139; Ch. Angelidi, Le séjour de Léon le Mathématicien à Andros: réalité ou confusion? in: ΕΥΨΥΧΙΑ. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler I. Paris 1998, 1–7; L. Andriollo, Aristocracy and literary production in the 10th century, in A. Pizzone (ed.), The author in middle Byzantine literature. Modes, functions and identities. *BA*, 28. Boston/Berlin 2014, 119–138; F. Barišić, Les sources de Génésios et du Continuateur de Théophane pour l'histoire du règne de Michel II. *Byzantion* 32 (1961) 257–271;[7] G.T. Calofonos, Dream Narratives in the *Continuation of Theophanes*, in Ch. Angelidi / G.T. Calofonos (eds.), Dreaming in Byzantium and beyond. Farnham 2014, 95–123. Finally, I will note the very recent doctoral thesis by Ch. Sideri, Νεωτερικές τάσεις στην ιστοριογραφία των Μακεδόνων. Η "περίπτωση" της Συνέχειας Θεοφάνη (βιβλία α΄–δ΄). University of Athens 2017, which the editors could not, needless to say, have taken into consideration.

As I have already noted, reading the text of *TheophCont*, the scholar is left with a positive impression. I propose to dedicate the remainder of this review to a selection of notes on several parts of the publication which I made as I was reading the volume.[8] A general observation: I wonder whether the *apparatus criticus* should include mistakes in accentuation or spellings which deviate from the norm or certain Byzantine peculiarities such as, for example, *θηράσαι* (proem. 19), *κρίθης* (1.3.43), *ὑγῖα* (1.6.21), *βαρεῖα* (1.6.44), *θέλλων* (1.10.13), *Ἰγνάτιος* (1.10.15), *θῆραν* (1.10.36), *θυσιστήριον* (1.10.40), *αἰσχύναι* (2.10.7), *ἐμποδῶν* (2.12.3), *ἰσχυροτεροτέρους* (2.13.30), *χειραμούς* (2.15.2), *ὁπλησάμενος* (2.15.6), *μοῖρᾶν* (2.16.5), *φήμει* (2.17.2), *κἀκεῖθεν* (2.18.17), *νεωτεροισμοῦ* (2.21.1), *διεπιθυμίας* (3.1.16), *ἐξουρίας* (3.4.8), *ἐξ ἀρνουμένους* (3.5.6), *πρὸς ἐπιδοὺς* (3.9.11), *ἐνανέσει* (3.9.49), *κούρσα* (3.26.29), *ἐξαρμενίων* (4.1.7), *οὐκ ἔτι* (4.18.16), *γυναικωνίτιν* (4.22.43–44), *δέδηκα* (4.25.92), *διδασκάλως* (4.27.28), *πέδα* (4.37.4), *Κωλωνείας* (4.38.9). It would take little or no effort to multiply such examples many times over.

Other entirely haphazard observations of a general nature would include: 1.1.9 a flawless restoration of the text; 1.3.19 de Boor proposes *τὴν ἀρχὴν τῶν*

---

7 The year of publication for Barišić, Génésios etc., which is included in the bibliography, needs to be corrected from 1959 to 1958.

8 The *Tabula notarum* in apparatibus adhibitarum precedes the text (p. 3–5). Some mistakes have found their way into the table: p. 4 the edition of Genesios is the work of A. Lesmueller-Werner and I. Thurn, not of Lesmüller-Wiener, as it is written. Another correction required a little further down on the same page: Verpeaux. Also the abbreviation *Vita Euthymii* is used on p. 5; this is an obvious source of confusion, and it should be made clear that the abbreviation refers to the Life of Euthymios of Sardis.

Φοιδεράτων, which is also supported by Skylitzes, and should, in my opinion, have been followed here; 1.9.14 the editors have very properly retained the spelling *πρωτοστράτωρος* (and *κοιαίστωρος* 1.22.10)[9]; 1.9.36 de Boor's correction αἰσθέσθαι, which the editors have adopted, is clearly correct; 1.10.2 although there is a reference in the text to the church of the Virgin of Pharos, a reference which clearly led the editors astray, their proposed correction *τὸ τοῦ θεοτόκου* is erroneous; the Vaticanus uses the abbreviation *θῦ* = *θεοῦ*, a form adopted by previous editors. Moreover, it is preceded by a masculine article. Thus, the phrase should remain *τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ*; 1.11.34 clearly *κηρυττούσης*, but the Vaticanus has κηρύττουσαν, which should probably have been retained; 1.11.41–42 apparatus fontium: φυχῆς is obviously erroneous; 1.14.6 de Boor's working hypothesis ἔλεον μὲν τῶν should perhaps have been adopted; 1.18.4 the correction τριβόλων is outstanding; 1.21.27 the same is true of the retaining of the conditional ἔχοι; 1.25.20 the correction ἔξαρχον is required; 2.11.1 de Boor's proposal should have been adopted here, too, and φησι added after εἶναι; this solution is also supported by Skylitzes.

2.11.10 should the ἐτύχανε of V have perhaps been retained? 2.14.21 preferable to retain V's use of τοῦ in lieu of the τούτους proposed by the editors; 2.14bis.45 Kambylis' proposal *δυσχειμερ<ώτερ>ον* should perhaps have been used (see *δριμύτερον* 2.14.44); 2.17.21 would it not have been better to favour the *πλείστου καὶ ἀξιολόγου* from the indirect tradition of Skylitzes?; 2.18.31 the καταρχὰς used in V is clearly preferable (here and elsewhere); 2.21.12 the corrected αὐξανομένους is reasonable; 2.21.29–30 the addition of the adjective ἐγκρατὴς seems correct to me; 2.23.6 the λαβὼν used in the manuscript of the Vatican and adopted by the previous editors should have been retained; 2.23.7 the removal of the word *ταύτης* seems correct.

3.1.5 a suggestion for the apparatus fontium: a discreet search of the TLG would produce numerous passages which include the phrase *διάπυρος ἐραστής*, which is almost identical to the ἔμπυρος ἐραστὴς in the text; 3.1.31 I am not at all convinced that the ἐπαινεῖν used in V and adopted by the previous editors should have been changed to *ἐπαινετόν*; 3.2.6 the addition of the *πλέον* from Skylitzes seems superfluous; the text makes complete sense without it; 3.3.8 *ὅθεν <περὶ> ἑκάστου τῶν πιπρασκομένων ὅσου πωλεῖται κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἠρώτα* (scil. Theophilos). I propose the following correction: *ὅθεν ἕκαστον τῶν πιπρασκομένων ὅσου πωλεῖται κατὰ τὴν ἀγορὰν ἠρώτα*. The text is acceptable without the addition of the περὶ, which comes from Skylitzes; 3.4.23 the με should not

---

9 But see 3.19.10, where we read πρωτοστράτορα, while de Boor had proposed πρωτοστράτωρα. Do both forms exist?

have been excised; 3.4.29 I consider the addition of the infinitive ἐξαγαγεῖν to be superfluous; 3.5.22 the correction ἀναζωπυροῦσα is convincing; 3.7.3 *ἔρωτι κατασχεθῆναι:* another suggestion for the apparatus fontium; a search of the TLG would return numerous related passages; 3.14.22 should ἀνέλιττεν, the form used in V, perhaps have been retained? 3.24.31–33 *ἅτε δὴ καταβεβλημένον ἰδὼν* (sc. Theophilos) *τὸν Σαρακηνὸν ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς εὐνούχου καὶ οὐ γενναίου τινός*. The English translation is as follows: "the emperor was ashamed in as much as he saw the Saracen thrown down by a eunuch and one of no noble birth". In this context, however, the adjective γενναῖος denotes not noble birth but courage or bravery – as a matter of fact, it has precisely the same meaning as in Modern Greek. Moreover, the adjective occurs with the same meaning at another point in the text: 3.37.3–4. Cf. also Ch. Messis, Les eunuques à Byzance. Entre réalité et imaginaire. Paris 2014, 132. 3.30.8 should have retained the ἡμεροδρομίων from V; See LSJ[9] s.v.; 3.38.19 very correctly retains the form λυπρόν; 3.43.1 the correction παραπέπηγε is, in my opinion, correct; 3.43.43 the term *οἰκουμενικὸς διδάσκαλος* is rendered as 'patriarchal academician' in the English, a translation which primarily recalls the so-called Patriachal Academy, which would not come into being until much later. The term *οἰκουμενικὸς διδάσκαλος,* which is extremely common and well-established from older eras, should certainly have been retained; 3.43.51 I wonder what the reasoning was for rejecting the πεποικιλμένοις used in V; 3.43.114–115 Bekker's correct proposal, *τὸ Καινούργιον*, was not adopted.

4.2.24 I consider the addition of ἄνδρες from Pseudo-Symeon to be convincing; 4.3.16 I also consider the adoption of αὐτοφώρῳ, again from Pseudo-Symeon, to be correct; 4.8.20 the addition of *Φωκᾷ* from Skylitzes is perhaps required, though it is noted in the apparatus criticus; 4.20.36 a comment on the φοιβόληπτος in the text and its rendering in English may be required; 4.25.35 the apparatus criticus should surely have referenced Genesios 68.18 *Πόρσοντα*; 4.28.9 definitely ἐπιτολαῖς; 4.29.5 *Ὕατρον*: at least a short bibliographic note should have been provided, given that Leo the Mathematician was formerly linked to Andros because of this exact passage, as published by Combefis and Bekker; 4.32.10 *πᾶσαν σκοτόμαιναν*: clearly needs to be added to the apparatus fontium, given that this extremely well-known phrase is found in the Church Fathers, the homilies of Leo the Wise, the hymnography, and in the work of a good many other writers. A brief consultation of the TLG would prove highly enlightening; 4.41.26–27 *καὶ ὁ λόχος* [*εὐτρέπιστο]* – *ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄλλος εὐτρέπιστο*: a clearly problematic phrase. I do not agree with the athetesis of the first verb εὐτρέπιστο, though the second εὐτρέπιστο should perhaps be emended. With reservations, I propose ἐδίδοτο.

The tables are definitely useful. I note the typographical error *proriorum*, p. 306. Also *Κρὴς* but not *Κρῆσσος, η, ον*, p. 317, icon not icona, p. 337.

I shall reiterate, by way of conclusion, that, despite the issues presented above, perhaps in a somewhat more detailed manner than necessary, the present edition of the *TheophCont* is a contribution to the field. The observations herein are noted precisely because of the text's great importance and the equally considerable interest its study has aroused.

Prof. Dr. Athanasios Markopoulos: Alkmanos 15, 11528 Athens, Greece;
markopou@phil.uoa.gr

Maria Gerolymatou, Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς Μονῆς Πατμου. Γʹ, Πατριαρχικά. Ἱστορικὴ Εἰσαγωγή. Διπλωματικὴ ἔκδοση. Athena, Institouto Historikon Ereunon, Ethniko Hidryma Ereunon 2016. 264 p., 22 plates. ISBN 978-960-9538-57-2.

This volume by Maria Gerolymatou provides a new critical edition of the medieval documents issued by patriarchs of Constantinople and preserved in the monastery of Patmos (hereafter *Patmos* 3). Most of them had already been edited in the sixth volume of *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi* by F. Miklosich and I. Müller (Vienna, 1890; hereafter *MM* 6), along with the other documents of Patmos. This is the third installment in the new edition of the Byzantine documents of Patmos appearing 26 years after the publication of the first two volumes that include the documents issued by emperors and officials: E. Branouse, Βυζαντινὰ ἔγγραφα τῆς μονῆς Πάτμου. Αʹ, Αὐτοκρατορικά; M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou, Βʹ, Δημοσίων Λειτουργῶν (Athens, Ethnikon Hidryma Ereunon 1980; hereafter *Patmos* 1–2). Before his death in 2000, Nikos Oikonomides had all but finished the edition of the private and monastic documents of Patmos, which will be completed by Gerolymatou, in order to appear as the fourth and final volume of the Patmos editions (as announced on p. 14 by Kriton Chrysochoides).

The volume includes a list of abbreviations, a note on the archives, a historical introduction, the commented edition of 13 documents (nos. 1–12 and Appendix), a general index, and, finally, 22 color reproductions of documents and seals. Three of the 13 edited documents were unedited, obviously left out in *MM* 6 because they do not concern Patmos (nos. 9 and 10) or because they are in a very bad state and of uncertain nature (the Appendix; I leave this document out of what follows). Nos. 1–8 date from the Byzantine period of Patmos (1087–1292) and nos. 11–12 from the period of Latin rule in the southeastern Ae-

gean (1504, 1512). Nos. 9 – 10 regard bishoprics of Asia Minor under Turkish rule (1384, 1430). Ten of the twelve documents are preserved in the original and two in contemporary copies.

This volume brings us one step closer to having a critical edition of the full body of the medieval Greek documents kept in Patmos, whose historical value is enormous. With more than 130 texts, mostly dating from the later eleventh through the early fourteenth century, the medieval archive of Patmos is one of the richest preserved. It is of particular importance because it provides information on the poorly documented southeastern Aegean and southwestern Asia Minor and because of its relative wealth in twelfth-century documents. As one would expect, the 12 patriarchal documents of *Patmos* 3 primarily deal with church matters, in particular Patmos's relations with the patriarchate and bishops of the region, but they also provide information on other issues, such as the monastery's properties and the general historical context. From the point of view of diplomatics, regarding in particular the patriarchal chancery, the ten Byzantine-era documents are of the greatest significance as they represent one fourth of the preserved loose patriarchal documents before 1453 including the earliest surviving original document of a patriarch (no. 1, 1087) and the only originals of the thirteenth century (as noted on p. 27). It is thus most fortunate that the reproductions of the documents are in color and of excellent quality.

In terms of presentation, there are some notable departures from *Patmos* 1 – 2, in addition to the use of color plates: the *katharevousa* has been abandoned as has the unwieldy format of the two earlier volumes for a more manageable 29 × 22 cm. In addition, the numbering of the documents in *Patmos* 3 does not continue that of the previous volumes but begins again with no. 1. The structure of *Patmos* 3, however, is much the same as that of *Patmos* 1 – 2. The historical introduction is arranged in thematic chapters discussing Patmos's relations with patriarchs and bishops, piracy in the region, conditions on the islands of Kos and Patmos in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, southwestern Asia Minor in the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. This detailed introduction goes well beyond the analysis of matters that arise from the edited documents (cf. p. 36) often resembling a general discussion of the history of the monastery and its surrounding regions. To some extent this is necessary given the distance that separates *Patmos* 3 from *Patmos* 1, which discussed at length the history of the monastery. It is also the product of the unfortunate decision of the earlier editors to present the documents according to diplomatic categories rather than chronologically. The edition part provides, for each document, a description of the document, an extensive paraphrase of the text in Modern Greek, a diplomatic edition of the text, and a developed commentary, including notes on diplomatics, dating, prosopography and various matters arising from the document. Much of what is

said in these latter notes could have been placed in the introduction to the volume.

My remarks to this volume are mostly of minor significance. First, certain observations of a purely practical nature. With the exception of the works for which an abbreviation is provided, shortened versions of the titles of works are used after their first mention, a quite inconvenient practice given that subsequent mentions often occur many pages after the first. Providing a bibliography of the works used or abbreviations for all works cited more than once and in different parts of the volume would have been preferable. Among the unfortunate results of following the presentation model of *Patmos* 1–2 is that the edition part of *Patmos* 3 does not indicate the documents' number and date on the top of every second page so as to facilitate the use of the volume (cf. the practice in the *Archives de l'Athos* series). Another impracticality is that in the description of the documents there is no reference to the number of the plate reproducing the document.

A more substantial remark regards the edition of the Greek texts. The editor has chosen the path of extreme caution generally using only the words and letters she could read in order to establish a document's text. The readings or restitutions provided in *MM* 6 or the nineteenth-century cartulary of the monastery (Patm. 848) are banished to the critical apparatus. Although sensible whenever the earlier readings or restitutions are doubtful, this practice makes little sense when these are plausible or beyond reasonable doubt. See for example, no. 1, ll. 10, 32; no. 4, ll. 3, 13; no. 9, ll. 13, 14, 23 (readings); no. 8, ll. 4, 6 (restitutions). Especially with regard to the readings, it should be noted that both the cartulary and the transliterations upon which *MM* 6 is based (apparently by I. Sakkelion and I. Phlorides) were prepared a century or more before the documents were photographed and studied again for the needs of *Patmos* 1–3 (*Patmos* 1, 135–37, 141; Patmos 3, 29–30), at a time when they obviously were in a better state. In conclusion, it would have made the problematic texts more readable if the acceptable readings and restitutions were retained in the text in brackets, their origin being indicated in the critical apparatus with "secundum MM" or "secundum B" (for Patm. 848). Another phenomenon also suggesting excessive prudence concerns letters that while sufficiently visible (on the plates) appear in brackets in the edition (e.g. no. 2, l. 40: αʹ in ͵ϛχμαʹ; no. 4, l. 8: ἀ in ἀφορμήν).

Finally, a few observations and additions to the historical introduction and the commentary to the documents. — While the bibliography of the introduction of *Patmos* 3 is generally full, I should note for the sake of completeness that the history of the properties of Patmos has been studied in K. Smyrlis, La fortune des grands monastères byzantins, fin du x[e] – milieu du xiv[e] s. Paris 2006, 73–83. — No. 4 may indeed date from 1252, as suggested by the editor, but there

does not seem to be any conclusive argument to eliminate 1222 and 1237 as other possible dates; cf. Smyrlis, La fortune 178 note 495. — The *exarchoi* of metropolitans were not envoys with special missions (*Patmos* 3, p. 170) but the prelates' representatives in the diocese, in charge of matters of faith and moral order and of collecting the *kanonikon*, in particular from episcopal monasteries: A. Dain, Formules de "Commission" pour un "nomikos" et un "exarchos". *REB* 16 (1958) 167–168; C. Pavlikianov, The mediaeval Greek and Bulgarian documents of the Athonite monastery of Zographou. Sofia 2014, no. 16, ll. 15–16. — The first of the properties of the monastery of the Savior (Soter) on Kos listed in *Patmos* 2, no. 69, ll. 23–26, did not consist of two *modioi* of *boidatike ge* (*Patmos* 3, p. 192) but of a land of two *boidatika*; the correct reading on l. 25 is: γῆς βοιδατ(ικῶν) δύο. — The archives of Vatopedi preserve three documents of nomination of metropolitans from the years 1467, 1486 and 1489/90: J. Lefort et al., Actes de Vatopédi III, de 1377 à 1500 (forthcoming), nos. 237, 241, 242, respectively (cf. *Patmos* 3, 209). Their text is very close to that of the nomination of 1430 preserved in Patmos (*ibidem*, no. 10) but quite different from that of 1384 (*ibidem*, no. 9).

In spite of the lesser issues noted above, *Patmos* 3 is a very good volume. The careful edition work and detailed commentary as well as the color reproduction of the documents constitute a most valuable contribution and will be of great benefit to historians and specialists of diplomatics alike.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Kostis Smyrlis: New York University, Department of History, 53 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012, USA; ks113@nyu.edu

The Laws of the Isaurian Era: The *Ecloga* and its appendices. Translated with introduction and commentary by Mike Humphreys. *Translated Texts for Byzantinists*, 3. Liverpool, Liverpool University Press 2017. ISBN 978-1-7869-4007-0.[10]

One of the greatest challenges in presenting the rich tradition of Byzantine law to a wider audience, especially students but also legal historians working in other fields, is a severe lack of translations into modern languages of major Byzantine

10 I would like to thank several people we gave me very helpful advice in the course of writing this review: John Haldon (Princeton) for his remarks on the translation of *strateia*; Taisiya Leber (Mainz) for helping me to clarify some of the passages of the Russian translation of the *Nomos Georgikos*; and Günter Prinzing and Max Ritter (both Mainz) for their advice in translating several difficult passages.

legal texts. Thus, for the seminal achievement of Byzantine jurists, the *Basilika* (a ninth-century Hellenized version of the Justinianic codification), scholars must content themselves with the nineteenth-century Latin translation of the brothers Heimbach, which partially accounts for the enduring popularity of their outdated edition of the text despite the long availability of the Groningen edition (which, however, has no translation attached to it).[11] A reliable translation of the *Novels* of Leo VI exists only in the Modern Greek translation of Spyros Troianos and in the French translation attached to Noailles' and Dain's edition, though less scrupulous historians can avail themselves of the English translation of Scott (now online), but this rendering is itself a poor translation of a Latin translation of the Greek text.[12] The most recent complete translation of the *Eisagoge* is in Spanish.[13] The aforementioned examples are all works of secular law stemming from the Middle Byzantine period; the state of translations for texts of Byzantine canon law, in particular from the later period, is, if anything, even worse.

Indeed, among modern languages, English in particular has been poorly served by translations of Byzantine legal texts. Most translation activity of this sort occurred at the start of the twentieth century and is connected with two scholars, Walter Ashburner and Edwin Hanson Freshfield. While Ashburner's translations of the *Rhodian Sea-law* or *Nomos Nautikos*, *Soldier's Law* or *Nomos Stratiotikos*, and *Farmer's Law* or *Nomos Georgikos* were all based on his own editions of these texts and are generally reliable, those of Freshfield, which include the *Ecloga*, the so-called *Ecloga private aucta*, the *Ecloga ad Prochiron mutata*, the *Procheiros Nomos*, the *Calabrian Prochiron*, and the *Book of the Eparch*, are perhaps better termed paraphrases than translations in the traditional sense.

Any attempt to provide completely new or improved translations to the meagre corpus of Byzantine legal texts already translated into English is therefore most welcome, and it is in this light that the new collection of translations of Mike Humphreys must be seen. Humphreys has already made a name for himself as the author of an insightful and provocative book on the legal reforms of

---

11 G. and K. Heimbach, Basilicorum Libri LX: post Annibalis Fabroti Curas ope codd. Mss. Lipsiae 1833 – 1897; H.J. Scheltema et al. (eds.), Basilicorum libri LX. Groningen 1953 – 1988.
12 P. Noailles/A. Dain, Les novelles de Léon VI le Sage. Paris 1944; S. Troianos, Οι Νεαρές Λέοντος ϛ' του Σοφού. Προλεγόμενα, κείμενο, απόδοση στη νεοελληνική, ευρετήρια και επίμετρο. Athena 2007; S.P. Scott, The Civil Law. Cincinnati 1932.
13 J. Signes Codoñer / F.J. Andrés Santos, La Introducción al derecho (Eisagoge) del Patriarca Focio. *Neuva Roma*, 28. Madrid 2007.

the Isaurian (or, more correctly, Syrian dynasty), which before the publication of his monograph had been above all connected with the publication of the famed *Ecloga* in the year 741.[14] HUMPHREYS, however, argued that the *Ecloga* was in fact only the beginning of an extensive attempt at legal reform which included the publication of the *Appendix Eclogae*, the *Farmer's Law*, *Soldier's Law*, *Rhodian Sea-law* and the *Mosaic Law* or *Nomos Mosaïkos*. This is not the place to discuss his reasoning for attributing each of these legal collections to direct imperial initiative, but I will nonetheless point out that his argument represents a substantial challenge to the standard narrative of the development of Byzantine law. In short, in HUMPHREYS' view the aforementioned laws are part of discrete program of legal reform, and are thus all included in this volume along with two novels of the empress Irene.

In his engaging and informative introduction to this collection of translations (p. 1–33), HUMPHREYS repeats much of the argumentation of his book and gives a good overview of each of the texts in this volume. There are some minor omissions of the relevant literature: for instance, on p. 15, where he discusses the commission that drafted the *Ecloga*, he does not cite the meticulous prosopographical study of Thomas PRATSCH (this is not cited in HUMPHREYS' monograph either).[15] His notion that the *Ecloga* produced significant alterations on Roman marriage law (p. 17), a view made influential by the German legal historian Karl Eduard ZACHARIÄ VON LINGENTHAL (1812–1894), was decisively refuted by Ludwig BURGMANN in his study on the same subject.[16] In addition, HUMPHREYS tends to cite the first editions of works that have been significantly updated and improved in further editions: thus, only the first edition of Spyros TROIANOS' important overview of Byzantine legal sources, published in 1986, is cited (for instance on p. 2, note 3), instead of the third edition published in 2011.[17] Yet these shortcomings represent only minor quibbles.

The first translated text in this volume is the *Ecloga*, and of the translations offered here it is the one most in need of a good English rendering. FRESHFIELD's paraphrase of the *Ecloga* was based on an older edition, while HUMPHREYS uti-

---

14 M.G.T. HUMPHREYS, Law, power, and ideology in the Iconoclast era, c. 680–850. Oxford 2015.

15 TH. PRATSCH, Ἡ ἀρχαία τοῦ πολιτεύματος δικαιοδοσία. Überlegungen zur Ecloga. *JÖB* 51 (2001) 133–158.

16 L. BURGMANN, Reformation oder Restauration? Zum Ehegüterrecht der Ecloga, in D. Simon (Hrsg.), Eherecht und Famliengut in Antike und Mittelalter. *Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien*, 22. München 1992, 29–42.

17 S. TROIANOS, Οι πηγές του Βυζαντινού Δικαίου. Athena ^{3}2011.

lizes the exemplary edition of Ludwig Burgmann.[18] Included with Burgmann's edition is a very accurate German translation. In what follows, I refer often to Burgmann's translation as a means of comparison with Humphreys.

Beginning with the *Ecloga*'s proem, Humphreys' translation is crisp and accurate. I would point out that the meaning of the famed "ἐπιδιόρθωσις εἰς τὸ φιλανθρωπότερον",[19] which he translates as "corrected to be more humane" (p. 34), has recently been interpreted by Andreas Schminck as actually to have meant "to be more concise".[20] It would at least have been helpful to alert the reader to this alternative interpretation. Also in the prologue, in a section enumerating those officials who were not permitted to accept customary legal fees (Lat. *sportulae*, Gr. ἐκταγιατικά) and were to instead receive their salary from the imperial purse, Humphreys renders "καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐπὶ τοῖς δικαστικοῖς κεφαλαίοις καθυπουργοῦσι" as "and all those who serve in judicial matters" (p. 38).[21] Burgmann in a similar manner translates this passage as "und allen im Rechtswesen Dienenden." Both translations, I would argue, are misleading, mainly because they ignore the meaning of "κεφαλαίοις" ("chief, principal"). In fact, only those officials serving in the higher/more important courts are to receive salaries and not accept the customary legal fees: a more accurate translation would therefore read "those serving in the chief judicial [affairs]."

Moving on to the first title: Regarding a betrothed woman breaking a contract of betrothal without legal grounds, then the sum promised by the betrothed man shall be given by the betrothed woman to him, and then Humphreys translates "along with anything else undertaken by him in the contract" (p. 45), which Burgmann renders as "zusammen mit der von ihm ausgefertigten Urkunde übergeben" for "τῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ γενομένης ὁμολογίας."[22] Burgmann's translation is much closer to the Greek than Humphreys, and should be rendered into English as "along with the agreement/document he had made".

After a betrothed man delays a marriage for two years, Humphreys translates "and after this she may summon him before witnesses to perform the marriage" (p. 45). This is not quite correct, and Burgmann's "und danach soll ihn die Seite des Mädchens unter Zeugen auffordern, die Ehe einzugehen", which is much closer to the Greek, could be rendered into English along the lines of

---

18 L. Burgmann, Ecloga. Das Gesetzbuch Leons III. und Konstantinos' V. *Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte*, 10. Frankfurt 1983.

19 *Ecloga*, Proem, line 6 (Burgmann 160).

20 A. Schminck, Minima Byzantina. *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Romanistische Abteilung* 132 (2015) 469 – 483: 469 – 474.

21 *Ecloga*, Proem, lines 104 f. (ed. Burgmann 166).

22 *Ecloga* 1.2, lines 123 f. (ed. Burgmann 168).

"after which the party of the girl should attest/testify that he enter the marriage".[23]

Turning now to Title 2 of the *Ecloga*, HUMPHREYS translates "And a nuptial gift from the man equal to the wife's dowry shall neither be stipulated nor conveyed" for "καὶ μὴ ἐπερωτᾶσθαι ἤ καταγράφεσθαι παρὰ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἰσόμετρον τῆς εἰσαγομένης αὐτῷ προικὸς προγαμιαίαν δωρεάν."[24] Though HUMPHEYS' translation of "stipulated" correctly reproduces the sense of the original Greek (which corresponded to an oral agreement or "stipulation", as discussed in note 31), BURGMANN's rendering "und vom Mann soll eine der ihm eingebrachten Mitgift gleichwertige Eheschenkung weder mündlich noch schriftlich versprochen werden" more accurately conveys the distinction between "promised orally or in writing" which does not come through in HUMPHREYS' translation ("conveyed" not connotating the emphatically documentary character of the Greek original). Thus, I would suggest "And a nuptial gift from the man equal to the wife's dowry shall neither be promised via oral agreement (*stipulatio*) or in writing."

Again within Title 2, HUMPHREYS translates "having been granted possession of the profit of the dowry" for "ὁμολογηθείσης παρ' αὐτοῦ προικὸς εἰς ἴδιον κέρδος ἐγκρατεῖν αὐτὸν" which sounds as though the dowry had been invested (which is not the case here), rather than BURGMANN's more accurate rendering "der bestätigten Mitgift als eigenen Gewinn erhalten" (p. 173), that is "having been granted possession of the dowry as his own gain".[25] Also, "or if she dies intestate [the remainder of the dowry] shall go to her next of kin" is not a correct rendering of the Greek "ἤ εἰς τοὺς ἐξ ἀδιαθέτου καλουμένους αὐτῆς κληρονόμους ἀποδίδοσθαι", which Burgmann translates "oder an ihre gesetzlich berufenen Erben herausgegeben werden".[26] In fact, HUMPHREYS' translation is factually incorrect as well, since the state or (later in Byzantine law) the "portion for the soul" (ψυχικόν) also figured as heirs to intestate inheritances. More accurately: "or [the remainder of the dowry] shall go those determined to be her heirs due to intestate succession."

For Title 2.4.2, which concerns the case of a husband dying childless before his wife, there is a mistranslation with important consequences: HUMPHREYS renders "then the entirety of the dowry shall revert to the wife, and a fourth part of all the man's property, up to the value of the dowry, shall also come to

23 *Ecloga* 1.3, lines 127 f. (ed. BURGMANN 168).
24 *Ecloga* 2.3, lines 162 f. (ed. BURGMANN 172).
25 *Ecloga* 2.4.1, lines 165 f. (ed. BURGMANN 172).
26 *Ecloga* 2.4.1, lines 168 f. (ed. BURGMANN 172).

her own profit" for "πρὸς τῇ ἐντελεῖ ἀποκαταστάσει τῆς ὁμολογηθείσης αὐτῇ προικὸς καὶ τέταρτον μέρος πρὸς τὸ μέτρον τῆς τοιαύτης προικὸς ἐκ τοῦ ἐγκαταλειφθέντων τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς, παντοίων πραγμάτων ἐπ' ὀνόματι κάσου εἰς κέρδος οἰκεῖον λαμβάνειν αὐτήν."[27] Again, BURGMANN's translation seems to this reviewer to more accurately follow the Greek, in that he interprets the passage as stating that the widow should receive her dowry intact as well as an additional amount from the dead husband's estate corresponding to up to a fourth of the value of her dowry ("dann soll die Frau in gleicher Weise zusätzlich zur vollständigen Erstattung der ihr bescheinigten Mitgift noch ein Viertel des Werts dieser Mitgift aus dem gesamten von ihrem Mann hinterlassenen Vermögensgegenständen unter dem Titel des Kinderlosigkeitsfalls als eigenen Gewinn erhalten"). Though the Greek is somewhat convoluted, BURGMANN's reading that the childless widow receive her dowry intact as well as a fourth of the value of the dowry from her husband's estate seems more convincing, especially considering the other Byzantine legislation on marriage. In addition, HUMPHREYS for some reason does not translate ἐπ' ὀνόματι κάσου εἰς κέρδος, and which BURGMANN renders "unter dem Titel des Kinderlosigkeitsfalls", which should actually be something like "for the sake of the instance [of childlessness]" (κάσ[σ]ος here being the Greek rendering of the Latin *casus*). The aforementioned remark on "next of kin" applies here as well.

There are some issues in Title 2.5 as well. At the beginning of *Ecloga* 2.5.1 HUMPHREYS translates "If a husband dies before his wife and they have subject children" (p. 47), but the Greek merely posits the existence of children ("Εἰ δὲ παίδων ὑπόντων"), though one could assume they are minors from the content of the rest of the passage.[28] More serious, however, is a mistranslation further into *Ecloga* 2.5.1. Regarding a widowed mother who marries again, HUMPHREYS translates "However, it if happens that she marries again, her children have leave to separate from her and receive all of their father's property without impairment, including the dowry brought by her to their father, and she shall retain only the gifts that may have been made in addition to her dowry." (p. 48). In fact, the Greek states ("εἰ δὲ συμβῇ αὐτὴν εἰς ἕτερον περιελθεῖν συνοικέσιον, ἄδειαν ἔχειν τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς παρεᾶν αὐτὴν καὶ πάντα τὰ πατρῷα αὐτῶν πράγματα ἀνελλιπῶς κομίζεσθαι, τὴν εἰσενεχθεῖσαν παρ' αὐτῆς τῷ πατρὶ αὐτῶν προῖκα καὶ μόνον σὺν τῆς ἀποχαρισθείσης παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐπαυξήσει τῆς προικὸς αὐτῆς δωρεᾶς παρέχοντα αὐτῇ") that in such a case the widowed mother who remarries shall retain her dowry and the gifts made to her by her husband in addition

---

27 *Ecloga* 2.4.2, lines 172 – 174 (ed. BURGMANN 172, 174).
28 *Ecloga* 2.5.1, line 177 (ed. BURGMANN 174).

to it, as BURGMANN correctly translates “Falls sie aber eine neue Ehe eingeht, dürfen ihre Kinder sich von ihr trennen und ihr gesamtes Vatergut ungemindert in Empfang nehmen, wobei sie ihr lediglich die ihrem Vater von ihr eingebrachte Mitgift zusammen mit der Schenkung, die dieser ihr zur Erhöhung ihrer Mitgift gemacht hatte, aushändigen müssen.”[29] A more accurate English translation would be: “However, it if happens that she marries again, her children have leave to separate from her and receive all of their father’s property without impairment, with them offering to her the dowry brought by her to their father, together only with the gift which he [the children’s father] granted to her for the augmentation of her dowry.”

Remaining within the second title of the *Ecloga*, HUMPHREYS offers a better rendering of the Greek for *Ecloga* 2.6., in that with a “common law marriage”, in which a marriage automatically arises when a man takes a free woman to live in his house as well as manage his household and has intercourse with her, he might try to expel her “due to childlessness” (p. 49) (“ἐξ αὐτῆς μὴ παιδοποιήσας”), while BURGMANN merely has “ohne Kinder mit ihr zu haben”, that is with no hint of barrenness being the reason for the man expelling her.[30] For *Ecloga* 2.7, I would repeat the same critique regarding translating the heirs from intestate succession as “next of kin”.[31] In *Ecloga* 2.8.1, which concerns second marriages if there are children from the first marriage, there is again a major error in HUMPHREYS’ translation. If a man has children from his first marriage and remarries, HUMPHREYS translates “However, if the man marrying for the second time has children, then he shall not be allowed to grant to his second wife in whatever form of gift any more than a child’s share of his first wife’s property.” (p. 50). Yet the Greek clearly states that he may not grant more than a child’s share from his first marriage “from his own property” (ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας περιουσίας), not from the property of his first wife, as correctly rendered by Burgmann (“aus seinem Vermögen”).[32] Finally, a last remark on HUMPHREYS’ translation of Title 2 of the *Ecloga* concerns the rendering of πορνεία, which he renders as “adultery”, as among the legitimate reasons for divorce (p. 51).[33] Yet both in Byzantine canon and secular law this word is more accurately translated as the broader crime of “sexual misconduct” or “fornication”, rather than the more narrow meaning of “adultery”.

29 *Ecloga* 2.5.1, lines 190 – 194 (ed. BURGMANN 174).
30 *Ecloga* 2.6, line 238 (ed. BURGMANN 178).
31 *Ecloga* 2.7, lines 236 – 238 (ed. BURGMANN 178).
32 *Ecloga* 2.8.1, lines 241 – 244 (ed. BURGMANN 178).
33 *Ecloga* 2.9.1, line 276 (ed. BURGMANN 178).

Regarding the inviolability of a dowry if the husband has debts or fines to pay, Humphreys' translation of "it happens from some misfortune" (p. 52) is to be preferred to Burgmann's "es kommt aufgrund irgendwelcher Umstände dazu": συμφορά in this context clearly suggests a negative event.[34]

Moving on to Title 5 of the *Ecloga*, which concerns wills, a general problem in the translation of Humphreys is a conflation of two meanings of the English word "will". This problem can be demonstrated on the basis of *Ecloga* 5.3, which Humphreys translates as "An oral will is contracted when the testator makes his will before seven assembled witnesses" (p. 54) for "Ἄγραφος συνίσταται διαθήκη, ὅτε ἑπτὰ μαρτύρων ἅμα εὑρισκομένων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὁ διατιθέμενος πεποίηται βούλησιν."[35] Here the etymological relation between English "will" (in the sense of a testament) and "will" (in the sense of a one's intentions) somewhat obscures the meaning of the original Greek: βούλησις should therefore be translated as "intent", so a clearer translation would read: "An oral will is contracted when the testator makes his intent [known] before seven assembled witnesses." This sense of the intent of the testator is correctly given in Burgmann's translation ("seinen Willen erklärt"). This comment also applies to *Ecloga* 5.4, 5.6 and 5.8.

For Title 7 of the *Ecloga*, which concerns orphans and their trustees, there is unfortunately a minor slip in Humphreys' translation which drastically changes the meaning of the text: if parents die and leave behind propertied children without a guardian, then in Constantinople the Orphanotropheion (τὸ ὀρφανοτροφεῖον), namely the empire's most richly-endowed philanthropic institution for much of the Middle Ages, along with the other reverend pious and renowned churches, are to receive their guardianship. Humphreys, however, has "the orphanages" (p. 57), though Burgmann correctly has the singular ("das Waisenhaus").[36] Quite bizarrely, Humphreys repeats this mistake later in the text (p. 62).[37] A more minor quibble: Humphreys has "known churches" for αἰ γεγνωρισμέναι ἐκκλησίαι, when of course what is implied is "well-known" or "famous". Moreover, the reference in the footnote (n. 77) is to the outdated first edition of Constantelos' Byzantine Philanthropy (instead of the revised second edition) and makes no mention of Timothy Miller's comprehensive study of the Orphanotropheion as well as orphans in Byzantium more generally.[38]

---

34 *Ecloga* 3.2, line 310 (ed. Burgmann 184).
35 *Ecloga* 5.3, lines 364 f. (ed. Burgmann 184).
36 *Ecloga* 7.1, line 568 (ed. Burgmann 198).
37 *Ecloga* 12.4, line 602 (ed. Burgmann 210).
38 D. J. Constantelos, Byzantine philanthropy and social welfare. New Rochelle, N.Y. ^{2}1991; T. Miller, The orphans of Byzantium: child welfare in the Christian empire. Washington, DC 2003.

Title 8 of the *Ecloga*, which HUMPHREYS translates as "Concerning freedom and slavery" (p. 57), is a rather loose rendering of "Περὶ ἐλευθεριῶν καὶ ἀναδουλώσεων", which would be more accurately translated as "Concerning manumissions and enslavements"; this is essentially the translation of BURGMANN ("Über Freilassungen und Versklavungen").[39] For *Ecloga* 8.1.6, HUMPHREYS improves upon BURGMANN's translation, which concerns a manumitted person who has fallen back into slavery, rendering "he shall appeal to the holy church of God and the appropriate magistrates" (p. 58), while BURGMANN renders ἄρχοντες as "Beamte".[40] "Magistrates" is more appropriate than "officials"/"Beamte". Moving on to *Ecloga* 8.3, HUMPHREYS has chosen an unusual translation for "Οἱ ἀπελεύθεροι, κἂν στρατευόμενοι ὦσιν", rendering it as "Freedmen, even if servants of the state" (p. 58): I see no reason to translate στρατευόμενοι in such a broad sense, as the passage clearly concerns soldiers, so a rendering along the lines of "Freedmen, even if they are connected to the army" would be correct (more on this question below).[41] BURGMANN translates the passage (perhaps to narrowly) as "Freigelassene werden, selbst wenn sie im Militärdienst stehen".

In the section on purchase and sales (Title 9), HUMPHREYS' translation has an important omission: he renders "ἡνίκα οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τῷ πράτῃ, τὸ δὲ εἶδος τῷ ἠγορακότι δοθῇ" as "Therefore, when the sale price is agreed and given to the buyer." (p. 59).[42] Yet it is not the price (τιμή) that is given to the buyer, but rather the good (εἶδος). A correct translation would read: "Therefore, when the price is given to the seller and the good to the buyer", similar to BURGMANN's "Sobald der Preis dem Verkäufer, die Sache dem Käufer". In addition, regarding two of the two legitimate reasons for overturning a sale, namely if the thing sold is a slave and he is either in fact free or possessed by demons (δαιμονιῶν): the second condition should not be translated as "mad" (HUMPHREYS, p. 204), since this stipulation refers explicitly to demon possession, when madness would have likely been rendered by some form of μαίνομαι.[43]

In the same title is a difficult passage where HUMPREYS' translation is clearly an improvement over BURGMANN's. HUMPHREYS translates "If a deposit is given for whatever kind of business or contract, and the contract is not fulfilled, and it is due to the carelessness of the giver of the deposit, the deposit shall be to the

---

39 *Ecloga* 8, line 472 (ed. BURGMANN 200).
40 *Ecloga* 8.1.6, lines 490 f. (ed. BURGMANN 200).
41 *Ecloga* 8.3, line 499 (ed. BURGMANN 202).
42 *Ecloga* 9.1, line 519 (ed. BURGMANN 204).
43 *Ecloga* 9.1, line 523 (ed. BURGMANN 204).

profit of the receiver; but if it is due to the perverseness of the receiver, then he shall give back the deposit and as much again to the giver" (p. 59) for " Ἐὰν ἀρραβῶν ἐν οἱῳδήποτε πράγματι ἤ συναλλάγματι δοθῇ, ὡς ἀτελοῦς ὄντος τοῦ συναλλάγματος, ἐξ ἀγνωμοσύνης μὲν τοῦ δεδωκότος ἐν κέρδει γενέσθω τοῦ λαβόντος ὁ δοθεὶς ἀρραβών, ἐκ διαστροφῆς δὲ τοῦ δεξαμένου τὸν ἀρραβῶνα ἀναδιδόσθω μετὰ καὶ ἄλλου τοσούτου τῷ δεδωκότι αὐτόν."[44] BURGMANN translates: "Wenn bei irgendeiner Sache oder einem Vertrag eine Arra gegeben wird, weil der Vertrag noch unvollständig ist, dann soll die Arra bei Verzug des Arragebers zum Gewinn ihres Empfängers werden, bei Rücktritt des Empfängers soll sie zusammen mit einer gleichgroßen Summe dem Geber erstattet werden." I see no reason here to assume that the ἀγνωμοσύνη refers to the bankruptcy ("Verzug") of the buyer, while διαστροφή I would also translate as perverseness rather than simply withdrawal ("Rückzug").

Regarding the conditions for a leasee of a perpetual lease selling his lease to others: after offering the right of first sale to the owner, if after two months the owner takes no action, then the leasee is free to sell, as I would translate it, "both [his] improvements and the right of lease". HUMPHREYS, however, translates that the tenant may sell the lease "to persons not forbidden from holding emphyteutic contracts and their improvements" (p. 61) for "τοῖς μὴ κεκλυμένοις προσώποις τά τε ἐμπονήματα καὶ τὸ τῆς τοιαύτης ἐμφυτεύσεως δίκαιον".[45] I don't think the Greek allows this interpretation, and logically what is being sold is the lease itself and the improvements the tenant had made upon it. BURGMANN has rendered it as "an erwerbsberechtigten Personen verkaufen, und zwar sowohl die Verbesserungen als auch das Pachtrecht selbst."

Though it is a minor point, it is nonetheless worth pointing out to readers that translating "πολιτεία" (for instance, p. 62) as "state" or "empire" has recently been called into question by Anthony KALDELLIS.[46] While one can object to translating this word as "republic", "state" or "empire" is probably not always the best translation; "commonwealth" or "commonweal" might be more appropriate at certain points.

In Title 14 of the *Ecloga*, which concerns witnesses, HUMPHREYS translates the qualifications of valid witnesses as follows: "Witnesses who hold a dignity, serve the state, have an honourable occupation or are wealthy are deemed *a pri-*

---

44 *Ecloga* 9.2, lines 524 – 527 (ed. BURGMANN 204).
45 *Ecloga* 12.2, lines 592 f. (ed. BURGMANN 210).
46 For instance, *Ecloga* 12.6, line 621 (ed. BURGMANN 212). On translating "πολιτεία" as something other than "state" or "empire", see A. KALDELLIS, The Byzantine republic: people and power in New Rome. Cambridge, Mass. 2015.

ori to be trustworthy" (p. 63), for "Οἱ μάρτυρες ἤ ἀξίαν ἤ στρατείαν ἤ ἐπιτήδευμα ἤ εὐπορίαν ἔχοντες κατὰ πρόληψιν δεκταῖοι τυγχάνουσιν". This is in at least one respect more accurate than Burgmann's translation, which would have it: "Zeugen, die eine Rangstellung oder rein militärisches oder ziviles Amt innehaben oder Vermögen besitzen, sind von vornherein glaubwürdig."[47] Yet BURGMANN omits ἐπιτήδευμα entirely in his translation, which most likely refers not to a civil office, but rather an honorable profession (e.g. craftsman). With HUMPHREYS' translation, it goes perhaps too far to describe those holding a στρατεία as they who "serve the state"; this technical language is best translated as "those who hold a *strateia*", with a footnote explaining what this is (a "Militärsteuer" according to the *LBG*), or perhaps "those paying the military tax".

HUMPHREYS in general seems to prefer designating those with the obligation of *strateia* as persons "serving the state", but again this translation is a very contorted rendering of the original Greek and would probably confuse the general reader. This also causes problems later in the translation, as in Title 16.3. Likely as a result of this odd rendering of *strateia*, HUMPHREYS misreads this passage as indicating that clerics, *chartoularioi* and other non-military persons transmitted their offices to their descendants (p. 67, note 128, which happened informally of course but was by no means a legally-sanctioned custom), when in fact what is being transmitted is the obligation of the *strateia*, which, as we see here, could be inherited by non-soldiers.[48]

Regarding the seventeenth and penultimate title of the *Ecloga*, which contains the lawbook's famous catalogue of criminal punishments, there are some further minor errors in Humphreys' translation. Regarding oaths in court, HUMPHREYS renders "ἐκ δικαστικῆς ψήφου" as "during a judicial inquiry" (p. 69). This, I would argue, is a mistranslation, as "ψῆφος" is in fact a judgment or decision, thus something along the lines of "because of a judicial decision". BURGMANN correctly has "aufgrund richterlichen Beschlusses".[49] There is another slight mistranslation in HUMPHREYS' rendering of this passage concerning someone who has slandered the Christian faith while in captivity: upon his return he "shall be given over to the state and the Church" (p. 70). Yet the Greek reads "ὑποστρέφοντες ἐν τῇ πολιτείᾳ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παραπεμπέσθαι", so that something along the lines of "upon returning to the commonwealth he shall be given over to the Church."[50] BURGMANN more correctly retains the sense of the Greek: "bei Rückkehr in den Staat der Kirche überantwortet werden."

---

47 *Ecloga* 14.1, lines 636 f. (ed. BURGMANN 214).
48 *Ecloga* 16.3, lines 730–741 (ed. BURGMANN 222).
49 *Ecloga* 17.2, line 770 (ed. BURGMANN 226).
50 *Ecloga* 17.6, lines 790 f. (ed. BURGMANN 228).

Regarding the conditions for marriage after the seduction of a maiden, HUMPHREYS has "However, if on his part he is not willing" (p. 74), but the Greek reads "εἰ δὲ ἕν τῶν μερῶν οὐ θελήσει" (p. 74), that is "However, if one of the parties is unwilling", and BURGMANN correctly renders "Wenn aber eine der Parteien nicht will."[51] Finally, concerning someone given a poison drink to someone else who then dies: Humphreys translates "or a slave to his master" for "δούλη τῇ αὐθεντρίᾳ" (p. 76).[52] Yet in the Greek both the slave and master are clearly female, thus "or a female slave to her mistress" would be more correct, and BURGMANN also retains this sense "eine Sklavin ihrer Herrin."

As the preceding pages have demonstrated, though HUMPHREYS' translation is an improvement on that of Burgmann in a few passages, BURGMANN's remains overall far more accurate. Moreover, many of HUMPHREYS' mistranslations often completely change the meaning of the original Greek. While mistakes are to be expected in any translation of an often difficult and dense legal text like the *Ecloga*, the vast majority of these slips could have been avoided had HUMPHREYS compared his own translation with that of BURGMANN. Indeed, making use of and referencing problematic passages on the basis of existing translations is a basic task of a translator, and this reviewer at least finds the apparent avoidance of BURGMANN's extremely accurate and reliable German translation puzzling. By listing the mistakes in HUMPHREYS' translation in the paragraphs above, it is to be hoped that these suggestions can be incorporated in a revised or corrected edition of the book under review, or perhaps used by a future translator of the *Ecloga*.

Fortunately, most of the remaining texts translated in this collection do not have nearly as many errors as the *Ecloga*. For the so-called *Krisis peri gambron stratioton* (p. 78 f.), I would only note that HUMPHREYS' translation of the title as "Concerning soldiers who are sons-in-law who enter into a household and bring with them their salary and their labor" (p. 78) is not quite correct at the end. The last part of this sentence "their labor" (καμάτους ποιούντων) is better translated as "fruits of their labor" (i. e. the results of their work).[53]

Concerning the *Solder's Law*, *Nomos Stratiotikos* (*NS*) or, as its editor ASHBURNER rendered it, "The Byzantine Mutiny Act" (which HUMPHREYS incorrectly cites as "The Byzantine Mutiny Law" throughout), there are a couple of minor

---

51 *Ecloga* 17.29, lines 866 f. (ed. BURGMANN 236).
52 *Ecloga* 17.42, line 915 (ed. BURGMANN 240).
53 Edition in D. SIMON, Byzantinische Hausgemeinschaftsverträge, in F. Baur / K. Larenz / F. Wieacker (Hrsg.), Beiträge zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte und zum geltenden Zivilrecht: Festgabe für J. Sontis. München 1977, 91 – 128, text at 94.

errors (p. 80 – 88).[54] *NS* 10 (according to HUMPHREYS' numbering of the contents, on p. 82), he renders "If anyone finds an animal or anything else small or great…" for "εἴ τις ἄλογον ζῶον ἤ ἕτερον τι εἶδος μικρὸν."[55] The Greek word εἶδος ("good" or "possession") is, however, mistranslated as the adjective "great". For *NS* 36: "If anyone willingly plans to desert to the barbarians" (p. 86), "willingly" is not in the Greek text.[56]

Moving on to the *Appendix Eclogae* (p. 89 – 112), HUMPHREYS' translation is quite good, and there are only a few minor slips.[57] For Title 3.5 (p. 93): HUMPHREYS again translates στρατεία as a "state post", which, as discussed above, is problematic. Regarding Title 6.1, HUMPHREYS' translation – "Anyone who gives poison to a slave instead of medicine shall be liable for the result, since he brought the cause of death. And the person who rashly gave the poison, [brought the cause of death] in the same way as [someone who gives a sword to] a madman." (p. 99) – does not conform at all to the text in the edition of BURGMANN and TROIANOS. The text instead reads "Ὁ φάρμακα ἀντὶ ἰατρείας δούλῳ δεδωκὼς ὑπόκειται [τὸ ἔργον], ὡς αἰτίαν θανάτου παρασχών· καὶ προπετῶς δοὺς φάρμακον, ὡς ὁ Γάιος", which reads, one might translate: "Anyone who gives poison to a slave instead of medicine shall be liable for the result, since he brought the cause of death. And the person recklessly giving him the poison, as Gaius [states]."[58] Finally, the heading of Title 14 falsely reads "From the 7th Book of the Codes of Justinian" (p. 112), when "Codex" or "Code" is meant.[59]

The next lawbook translated in this collection is the Rhodian Sea-Law or *Nomos Nautikos* (*NN*) (p. 113 – 128). Since ASHBURNER already provided an English translation of the text with his edition, there is little to say about HUMPHREYS' translation, except that one now has a rendering of the text into more contemporary English. More interesting, by contrast, is his translation of the *Farmer's Law* or *Nomos Georgikos* (*NG*) (p. 129 – 139), which HUMPHREYS has made on the basis of the newer Russian edition of the text.[60] In section 7, regarding two districts disputing a boundary or field: HUMPHREYS in the second in-

54 Edition in W. ASHBURNER, The Byzantine mutiny act. *JHS* 46 (1926) 85 – 109.
55 *NS* 10 (50) (ed. ASHBURNER 107).
56 *NS* 36 (6) (ed. ASHBURNER 91).
57 Edition in L. BURGMANN/S. TROIANOS, "Appendix Eclogae". *Fontes Minores* 3 (1979) 24 – 125.
58 *Appendix Eclogae* 6.1 (ed. BURGMANN/TROIANOS 109).
59 *Appendix Eclogae* 14 (ed. BURGMANN/TROIANOS 124).
60 Edition in I. MEDVEDEV et al., Византийский Земледельческий Закон. Leningrad 1984.

stance translates “ὅρος ἀρχαῖος” as “an ancient boundary stone” (p. 7).[61] While perhaps this was the case (though natural boundaries would also have served equally well), there is no compelling reason to read so much into these two words and not translate “ancient boundary”. In the Russian translation one also finds the relatively neutral “старая граница”. Regarding section 9, instead of translating a “γεωργὸς μορτίτης” as “a farmer on shares [i.e. a farmer whose rent was a share of the crop]” (p. 130), the well-known term “sharecropper” would work.[62] To be fair, HUMPHREYS’ rendering is no better than the artificial Russian construction “земледелец-мортит”. As a last point on the *NG*, section 21 concerns the case where a farmer builds a house or plants a vineyard on land he doesn’t own. HUMPHREYS’ translates “at the loss of another’s land” for “ἐν ἀπόρῳ ἀλλοτρίῳ τόπῳ”.[63] What is actually meant, however, is something more like “on the uncultivated/undeveloped land of another” (another plausible reading would be “inaccessible land”, but I find this interpretation less convincing); the Russian translation likewise bears this out with the rendering “на чужой пустоши”, that is “on a desolate spot”.

The *Farmer’s Law* is followed by a translation of the so-called *Nomos Mosaïkos* (*NM*), a collection of excerpts from the Septuagint (p. 140 – 163). Naturally, given the numerous English translation of the Old Testament, most readers will not find anything new here, but the inclusion of the translation of the *NM*, which according to HUMPHREYS is also a compilation of the Isaurian era, nonetheless makes sense.

Finally, at the end of the book is a translation of two short novels of the empress Irene (p. 164 – 168).[64] As is the case with HUMPHREYS’ translation of the *Ecloga*, I found many readings which I consider incorrect, yet could have been corrected had he compared his translation more carefully to that of Ludwig BURGMANN. For one very important passage in the first novel, however, HUMPHREYS does offer a much better interpretation of the Greek. In the part of the novel talking about the law handed down to Moses, HUMPHREYS translates “For those who have clung to the sojourn of this age lately could not be made to hear the truth itself” (p. 164) for “οὐ γὰρ οἷοί τε ἦσαν αὐτὴν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἄρτι ἀκουτισθῆναι οἱ τῇ παροικίᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦδε προστετηκότες.”[65] He plausibly interprets this as an attack on the Isaurians themselves (p. 164 f., note 4).

---

61 *NG* 7 (ed. MEDVEDEV et al. 99).
62 *NG* 9 (ed. MEDVEDEV et al. 100).
63 *NG* 21 (ed. MEDVEDEV et al. 104).
64 Edition in L. BURGMANN, Die Novellen der Kaiserin Eirene. *Fontes Minores* 4 (1981) 1 – 36.
65 *1st Novel of Eirene*, lines 13 f. (ed. BURGMANN 16).

This is in fact a better, more historically-grounded rendering than BURGMANN's "denn in ihrem Erdendasein jenem Zeitalter verhaftet, waren sie nicht in der Lage, gleich die Wahrheit selbst zu Gehör gebracht zu bekommen." Burgmann completely omits the "ἄρτι" ("recently", "just now") of the Greek text. In the next sentence the Greek reads "ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν αὐτὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Θεὸς ἡμῶν παραγέγονεν εἰς τὸ σῶσαι τὸ γένος ἡμῶν."[66] Humphreys translates "But at the end of days, He himself, the son of God and our God, shall come to save our race" (p. 164 f.). This translation is, however, grammatically impossible, because the Greek verb is in the perfect tense and cannot plausibly refer to a future event. BURGMANN renders the same sentence "In den jüngsten Tagen aber erschien Er selbst, Gottes Sohn und unser Gott, um unser Geschlecht zu erlösen." A better translation would therefore be something along the lines of "But in recent days the Son of God Himself and our God has appeared to save our people."

Continuing to the next sentence, the Greek reads "πληρώσας οὖν τὸν δοθέντα πάλαι διὰ Μωϋσέως νόμον καὶ φωτίσας πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀληθείας δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὡς τελείοις κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν τὸν τέλειον νόμον τῆς αὐτοῦ χάριτος."[67] HUMPHREYS translates this as "Bringing in this way the Old Law given through Moses to completion and illuminating all peoples with the knowledge of His truth, He gave to us, we who are to be perfected, knowledge of His perfect law from His grace." (p. 165). This is a slight mistranslation, especially because "knowledge" is not what is given, but rather "the perfect law". A more accurate rendering would be "Bringing in this way the Old Law given through Moses to completion and illuminating all peoples with the knowledge of His truth, He gave to us, we who are perfect in [this] knowledge, the perfect law of His grace." This part of the sentence is correctly rendered in BURGMANN's translation "gab Er uns als den vollkommen Erkenntnisfähigen das vollkommene Gesetz Seiner Gnade."

Further into the text, HUMPHREYS translates "πραγματεία" as "edict", but this rendering assumes too much, as in fact something like "treatment" or "commentary" would be a more fitting translation.[68] BURGMANN has "Ausführungen". In another part of the novel listing trustworthy witnesses, HUMPHREYS renders "magistrates, imperial officials, leading citizens of wealth or with a profession" (p. 166) for "ἀρχόντων, στρατευομένων, πολιτευομένων, εὐπορίαν ἤ ἐπιτήδευμα

---

66 *1st Novel of Eirene*, lines 13 – 16 (Ed. BURGMANN 16).
67 *1st Novel of Eirene*, lines 16 – 18 (Ed. BURGMANN 16).
68 *1st Novel of Eirene*, line 24 (Ed. BURGMANN 18).

ἐχόντων".[69] This is not quite correct, and a better translation would read: "magistrates, those connected with the army or those holding civil office, those possessing either wealth or [practicing] a trade." The translation of BURGMANN is more accurate, but he does not differentiate between "magistrates" and "those holding civil office", rendering this part of the passage "militärische oder zivilen Beamten, Personen, die Vermögen oder Beruf haben." Yet, at least in the original Greek, "ἀρχόντων, στρατευομένων, πολιτευομένων" seem to be three separate categories of witnesses. In any case, the omission of soldiers or those connected with the military is not called for.

Finally, in a section of the novel regarding disagreements arising over contracts, witnesses are to be called forth and documents produced, and the witnesses, according to HUMPHREYS, "shall be asked about whether the document is genuine" (p. 166) for "ἐρωτᾶσθαι αὐτοὺς περὶ τῶν ἐγγράφων, εἰ ἀληθινά εἰσι."[70] Yet attesting to the validity of legal documents in Byzantine law was not something witnesses were called to do, this being instead the job of officials. The latter would affix their seals to documents after they had been written to prove that they were genuine. In this context, the witnesses are instead being asked whether the contents of documents are true (ἀληθινά): a better translation would read "shall be asked whether the documents correspond to the truth." If the testimony of the witnesses agreed with the content of the documents, then the case could be easily be resolved. BURGMANN correctly translates this as "sollen … die Zeugen befragt werden, ob die Urkunden wahrheitsgemäß sind."

In summation, HUMPHREYS has produced a handy collection of translations of important Byzantine legal texts. Despite the large numbers of slips in his rendering of the *Ecloga* and the two novels of Irene, HUMPHREYS' compilation nonetheless represents a praiseworthy foray into what remains a huge mass of mostly untranslated, especially into English, Middle Byzantine legal texts. Hopefully, the recommendations listed here can be incorporated into a revised edition of the text, which would then offer not only an accessible and elegant translation (as HUMPHREYS' translation already is), but also a more accurate rendering, comparable to what Ludwig BURGMANN has already imparted to German-speaking scholarship.

Dr. Zachary Chitwood: Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Historisches Seminar, Arbeitsbereich Byzantinistik, Jakob-Welder-Weg 18, 55099 Mainz; zchitwoo@uni-mainz.de

---

69 *1st Novel of Eirene*, line 55 (Ed. BURGMANN 20).
70 *1st Novel of Eirene*, line 65 (Ed. BURGMANN 20).

Markéta KULHÁNKOVÁ, Das gottgefällige Abenteuer. Eine narratologische Analyse der byzantinischen erbaulichen Erzählungen. *Pro Oriente*, 31. Červený Kostelec, Pavel Mervart 2015. 170 S. ISBN 978-80-74651-75-5.

This slim book is a huge step forward in the field of Byzantine narratology. It studies a representative number of beneficial tales (*diegeseis*, *historiae animae utiles*): the anonymous *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* (4th–5th c.; henceforth *HME*), the *Historia Lausiaca* by Palladios (5th c.; *HL*), "das so genannte Daniel-Sketiotes-Dossier" (6th c.; *DS*), the *Pratum Spirituale* (7th c.; *PS*) by John Moschos, the narrations of Anastasios Sinaites (7th c.; *AS*), and the so-called *récits tardifs* by Paul of Monembasia (10th c.; *PM*). It will be useful to students of hagiography, Byzantine literature, narratology and diachronic poetics.

Markéta KULHÁNKOVÁ (K.) considers "dass Hagiographie kein Genre, sondern einen breiteren, dem Genre übergeordneten Bereich darstellt" (p. 17); the beneficial tale, in turn, is a genre integrated into hagiography, together with apophthegma, acta, vita, enkomion, translatio, etc. K. defines it as "ein narratives Genre der Hagiographie, das der mündlichen Tradition des frühen Mönchtums enstprang und volkstümliche Züge durch seine gesamte Existenz behielt. Es handelt sich dabei um eine knappe Erzählung mit einer Handlungslinie, die auf eine deutliche erbauliche Pointe hinausläuft und auf ein gemischtes – monastisches wie säkulares – Publikum abzielt" (p. 21).

The book aims at presenting the most relevant narratological aspects of beneficial tales. It is divided into six chapters: an introduction (p. 13–40); a chapter on narrative structure (p. 41–66); a chapter on spatiality (p. 67–89); a chapter on temporality (p. 91–107); a chapter on the narrator (p. 109–130); final considerations on the development of narrative strategies in beneficial tales (p. 131–142).

The introduction comprises a section on the genre (p. 13–21), the texts (p. 21–33) and the methodology of the work (p. 34–40).

The second chapter, "Der bestrafte Mönch: Erzählstruktur", may give an idea of the most interesting characteristics of the book. "In diesem Kapitel werden die elementaren Handlungseinheiten und die Rollen der einzelnen Gestalten in einer motivisch verbundenen Gruppe von Erzählung analysisert" (p. 41). K. aims at answering four very precise questions (p. 44): "1. Wie viele Elementarsequenzen von Kardinalfunktionen sind in der Erzählung zu identifizieren [...]?"; "2. Welche andere Funktionen (Katalysen, Indizien, Informanten) kommen zur Geltung [...]?"; "3. Welche und wie viele Modellsituationen sind auszumachen?"; "4. Welche und wie viele Aktanten treten auf?" After carefully explaining the concepts she utilizes, K. submits her texts to a close reading. By doing so, she does not merely determine, e.g, the number of elementary sequences, but gives a clear and convincing overview of the evolution of the genre. To restrict

her corpus, K. only examines in this chapter tales which feature the "Motiv des Hochmuts eines Mönches bezüglich der eigenen asketischen Qualitäten und seiner Bestrafung" (p. 44), with one exception in section 2.3 (about *Pratum spirituale*), where the motif does not appear: "hier [kommt] das Thema des Hochmuts überhaupt nicht vor" (p. 53).

It is widely known that the tales of *HME* are relatively schematic. The one chosen by K. (*HME* 1) has only four elementary sequences (p. 46–49); "Nebenfunktionen [kommen] nur in geringer Anzahl [vor]" (p. 49); the actants are relatively few: "Das generelle Verhältnis Subjekt-Objekt [...] verwandelt sich in der zweiten Sequenz in die Beziehung Adjuvant (Mönch) – Subjekt (Trugbild)" (p. 49). Finally: "Von den Modellstituationen kommen hier zwei zur Geltung: die Mangelsituation und die Bestrafung" (p. 49). The story, in short, is minimal in every respect. This would show its dependence upon oral narratives.

The second story analysed is *HL* 25. The tale is even shorter: three elementary sequences (p. 51). "Palladios Erzählung ist also, was den Handlungsablauf betrifft, sogar noch etwas schlichter als der Erzählung der *HME*, jedoch um manche Expansionen (Katalysen) und einen wichtigen Aktanten bereichert" (p. 52); nothing is said about model situations (types narratifs élementaires). A question is here inevitable: are the selected tales fully representative of the whole collections? Is *HME* generally more complex in plotting than *HL?* Both are "dem Genre der historia einzuordnen" (p. 20); they are "eine Mischung von Hagiographie und Reisebeschreibung" (p. 20). Given these similarities, are the differences in individual stories significant? Do they mirror a more general trend? K. is very clear about her conviction "dass es sowohl richtiger als auch praktischer ist, die einzelne Erzählung und nicht die Sammlung als Genre aufzufassen" (p. 19). Still, a short structural analysis of a larger sample of tales, if not of the full collections, would be welcome, particularly in the case of collections sharing an analogous narrative structure. (Indeed, this is what K. does in her third chapter: "Wir haben diese [i.e. die Konstruktion des Raumes] nicht in den einzelnen Erzählungen, sondern im Hinblick auf die Sammlungen als Ganzes betrachtet" [p. 133].)

The third tale (*PS* 7) consists of nine elementary narrative sequences, which, however, are "nur um eine geringe Zahl von Nebenfunktionen erweitert" (p. 54). "Ebenso ist auch die Anzahl der Aktanten erhöht" (p. 55); "es kommen hier auch noch [zwei] Modellsituationen [...] zum Tragen: die Verplichtung und die Aufopferung" (p. 55). K. underlines in passing that "[d]er Held ist hier nicht mehr namenlos" (p. 52) and that for the first time in her corpus "der Erzähler persönlich an der Handlung partizipiert" (p. 54, note 26).

In K.'s fourth tale (*PM* 10) the greater narrative complexity becomes evident. Also the fact that this complexity is not directly linked to the plotting: "Obwohl

viel länger als die Erzählung der *HME*, ist Paulos' Geschichte im Grunde fast genauso einfach" (p. 55); indeed it is "noch einmal eine schlichte Geschichte, durch verschiedene Nebenfunktionen erweitert, die das Erzählen beleben, die Spannung verstärken und das erbauliche Element hervorheben" (p. 58). K. mentions two important supplementary characteristics of the tale: the abundance of dialogue and "die beinahe psychologische Studie eines betrogenen Mönches" (p. 56–57); less attention is paid to actants and model situations (p. 56–58).

The fifth tale, by Neophytos Enkleistos (*BHG* 1450), is, however interesting, not directly comparable to the previous four. Regrettably, there is no section on *DS*, possibly because of the thematic restriction of the chapter tackling only stories about the excessive confidence of a monk in his own virtue.

The Zusammenfassung of the chapter is actually not a résumé but a set of more general notions on the genre, which take no account of the four basic questions that successfully structured the whole chapter. It highlights three important points: all authors or narrators claim that the story was told to them (p. 63); they state or imply that it took place shortly before the narration (p. 63); the events took place shortly before the narration (p. 63); "die mündliche Überlieferung der erbaulichen Erzählung steht außer Zweifel, der orale Charakter kann sogar als einer der Hauptzüge des Genre bezeichnet werden" (p. 64). All this might well be true, but it is not where the five sections of the chapter were pointing at. In particular, the final remarks on orality are somewhat troubling. K. does not elaborate on this point, nor does she quotes the extensive bibliography on oral storytelling, which has been so productive e.g. on the analysis of the Ephesiaka by J.N. O'Sullivan, Xenophon of Ephesus: his compositional technique and the birth of the novel. Berlin 1995. In addition to this, the posited orality of the forerunners of a tale is possibly not indispensable to narratological analysis, particularly in a chapter devoted specifically to narrative structure. It might belong in a genetical analysis, unless the oral features of a narrative are defined and formalized. The simplicity of a tale – its resemblance to a primary genre or a 'natural' form of narrative – is not ipso facto a proof of oral ancestry.

About the third chapter, "Zwischen Wüste und Welt", K. states: "Es wird uns eher der Raum als Rahmen (frame) der Erzählung interessieren als die geographische Lokalisierung der Geschichte" (p. 68). However, "[d]ie geographische Lokalisierung der Geschichte ist in den meisten Sammlungen der erbaulichen Erzählung ausdrücklich angegeben" (p. 68). This, it may be argued, provides an effet de réel. Interestingly, a typical device for giving space a prominent position is missing: "die Ekphraseis fehlen hier fast vollständig" (p. 67). The general questions each section will answer are not so clearly stated as in the previous chapter. Tales analysed are from the *HME*, *DS*, *PS*, *AS* and *PM* (*HL* is missing). In lieu of a conclusion, there is a section on heterotopies.

The first section lucidly remarks that *HME* is “Reiseberichte und nicht [...] Reiseführer” (p. 70). We see a “Verbindung des Wundersamen mit dem Fernliegenden” (p. 70); sanctity is linked to a certain place (Egypt), which is ‘ein mystisches Gelände’ (p. 70). “Die Wunder stellen in dieser Welt ein alltägliches Phänomen dar, man ist hier Gott am nächsten” (p. 71). “Die Eremiten leben [...] in voller Übereinstimmung mit der Natur und sind sogar oft mit wilden Tieren befreundet” (p. 71). Interestingly, “[d]er Raum der Wüste ist nicht nur von der säkularen Welt abgetrennt, sondern auch von den anderen monastischen Gemeinschaften” (p. 72); there is also a displacement between the hero of the stories and the implicit reader, and the author/narrator has a role as intermediary between both worlds (p. 72).

In *DS*, “stellt [...] die Wüste einen sicheren und statischen Stützpunkt dar, von dem der weise Greis in die Welt hinaus reist, um seine Abenteuer zu erleben und Belehrung zu finden” (p. 75) and, in turn, to have exciting stories with a strong morality to tell.

As is well-known, in *PS* John Moschos “schöpft den Stoff aus einer Reise des Autor-Erzählers mit seinem Freund Sophronios” (p. 75). There are almost no descriptions (p. 76). In the first part predominate purely monastic narratives taking place in the desert, in the second monastic and secular worlds come together, and in the end of the collection purely secular narratives accumulate (p. 76 – 77).

In *AS* not so much the tension between the monastic and the secular world comes into light, but “der Konflikt der christlichen und der islamischen Welt” (p. 78). Anastasius’ world is full of miracles, and “die Verbindung der Wunder mit dem Raum [ist] grundlegend” (p. 79); as in *HME*, we see here “die Domestizierung der Natur, vor allem von wilden Tieren” (p. 79). Space itself contributes to the sanctity of the holy man (p. 80).

As regards *PM*, “[i]m Vergleich zu den vorigen Sammlungen wird der genauen Lokalisierung und sogar Beschreibung von Orten auffällig viel Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet” (p. 83). Through this, “nähert sich die Umwelt in Paulos’ Erzählungen dem an, was Michail Bakhtin als ‘den abenteuerlichen Alltagsroman’ bezeichnet” (p. 85).

All of K.’s remarks testify to an acute interpretative power, yet a word on the different kinds of spatiality would have been useful: for instance, a distinction between objects and landscape (both directly subjectable to sensory perception) on the one hand, and the more “abstract” and often void space through which agents move on the other. The different kinds of perspective might also offer a possible link between spatiality and the position of the narrator (a few words on perspective appear on the fifth chapter, as we will see below); the usual point of view is naturally spatial. The difference between a panoramic viewpoint

and a close-up might be relevant when defining the world picture and the implicit conception of spatiality in a given work.

According to K., in this chapter "gehen wir von der Ebene der Geschichte zu der Ebene der Erzählung" (p. 67). More development on the concepts of erzählte Welt as opposed to Erzählwelt (mentioned on p. 80), possibly with references to de Jong's fabula-space and story-space, would have been welcome. It would have clarified why story (histoire, Geschichte) is less relevant in a study of spatiality. True, narrative space is not analogous to narrative time; the difference of temporality in story and narration is not translatable into a symmetrical spatial opposition. Still, the space of literature (and the erzählte Welt) might be fruitfully distinguished from the space in literature (and the Erzählwelt). Also interesting is a peculiar middle ground, which bridges the way between narrated world and world of the narration: symbolic geography, which provides a number of useful tools for distinguishing levels of meaning in spatiality. Egypt may be a mythic land in *HME*; still, it is not the same as the fictional Eurykomis and Aulikomis of Hysmine and Hisminias by Eumathios Makrembolites. The narrated world never is the "real" world, yet real geographic denominations have a distinct effect on perceptions of space. This is why a more detailed analysis of the Erzählwelt, and of spatial categories associated to it, would have have added something to this chapter.

For reasons of space, I will deal with the remainder of the book more briefly. The fourth chapter, "'Das alles ist nicht lange her': Die Zeitaspekte", is divided into thematic units, not into sections devoted to individual works: "Die Bestimmung der erzählten Zeit" (p. 92–97); "Die Augenzeugenschaft" (p. 97–100); "(Durchlebte) Zeit als Mittel der Charakteristik" (p. 101–103); "Rythmuswechsel: Daniel Sketiotes" (p. 103–107). A short description of the temporal aspects outlined by Genette (duration, frequency, etc.) appears in the introductory pages.

The fifth chapter, "Erzähler – Held – Autor: Narrative Ebenen und Funktionen des Erzählers", wraps up K.'s systematic approach to all basic categories of narratology. All the collections analysed by K. have "Einführungsformeln", "vermittelte[s] Erzählen" and "Wechsel der narrativen Ebenen" (p. 115). It is possibly in this latter aspect that the chapter is more illuminating: who heard what from whom, and how many mediations are between the actions and the written version? In the section on *DS*, another points of discussion are added: "eine weitere Frage, und zwar jene der Perspektive, des narrativen Modus und der Fokalisierung: Statt nach 'Wer spricht?' muss man hier nach 'Wer sieht?' fragen" (p. 122–123). By these and similar observations, K. makes clear why *DS*'s technique is sophisticated in many respects. In the concluding remarks of the chapter K's underlines that '[i]n all den analysierten Texten ist […] die Beglaubigungsfunktion der einzelnen Erzähler besonders wichtig' (p. 128). The tales have a "wich-

tige ideologische Funktion, sie hängen also einen didaktischen Kommentar an" (p. 129).

The sixth chapter, "Schlussbetrachtung", makes a summary of the previous chapters and adds a note on the evolution of the genre during the six centuries between the first and the last collection of K.'s corpus: "[man] kann [...] wahrscheinlich wagen, zumindest die drei folgenden Haupttendenzen festzustellen: seine Säkularisierung, die Erweiterung der nicht-narrativen Elemente und den Verlust des mündlichen Charakters" (p. 138). The first element has probably little to do with intra-generic evolution, for it most likely concerns an epochal change in Byzantine culture as a whole; the third point is not directly proven with narratological tools and, at any rate, the "real" or "fingierte Mündlichkeit" are not dealt with in a formal (linguistic) way. The second point (the multiplication of non-narrative elements), on the other hand, is extensively and adequately accounted for in K.'s chapter on narrative structure. A short English résumé, a bibliography and an index follow.

Narratology is clear about which questions have to be asked prima facie to a text. Temporality, spatiality, narrative structure and the place of the narrator cannot be missing. K. makes good use of this systematic character of her methodological framework. She provides a synoptic view of the works considered. Now it is easy, for instance, to compare the temporality of *DS* and, say, the *Life* of Apollonius of Tyana (studied by T.J.G. Whitmarh in I.J.F. De Jong / R. Nünlist (eds.), Time in ancient Greek literature. Leiden 2007). The awareness of similarities and divergences of these very different yet comparable works will allow a more distinct picture of Byzantine literature and its changes. It may also serve as a starting-point for in-depth monographical interpretations of individual works.

This book is not only useful. It is also a joy to read and, it might be hoped, it will encourage similar endeavours in the field of Byzantine studies. Enterprises such as this will help to make Byzantium more accessible to a larger audience of western medievalists, students of Greek and modern literature and, more generally, to the famously ill-defined "intelligent layman".

Dr. Tomás Fernández: Carlos Calvo 632, 10 L, 1102 Buenos Aires, Argentina;
Tomas.Fernandez@conicet.gov.ar.

Fevronia Nousia, Byzantine textbooks of the Palaeologan period. *Studi e Testi,* 505. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 2016. 340 p. ISBN 978-88-210-0969-3.

Fevronia Nousia's book, a reworked version of her thesis submitted to the University of London, deals with the Byzantine textbooks of the Palaeologan period. After giving a brief sketch of the development of Byzantine education through the centuries, the author proceeds to an investigation of a subject which has drawn the attention of many scholars recently, namely that of Byzantine schedography, a method of teaching Greek invented in the 11th century and further developed during the Comnenean period. The main part of the book is devoted to the investigation of the manuscripts preserving textbooks of the Paleologan period. It is to the author's credit that she amassed a substantial material of manuscript sources based on the investigation of a wide (though not exhaustive) list of the catalogues of manuscripts belonging to modern libraries. Unfortunately from that vast material she chooses to present just three key cases: the schedography of Manuel Moschopoulos, a well known author of the first half of the 14th century, the Parekbolaion of Konstantinos Arabites, an obscure teacher of the late Paleologan period, and the textbooks containing Homeric texts followed by scholia, which were copied by the scribe Michael Lygizos (second half of the 15th century). Although the examination of those cases reveals quite a lot of things about the late Byzantine educational practice, it hardly exhausts the subject which the author has chosen as the title of her book.

What is more alarming is the neglect with which the author has published the *Parekbolaion* of Konstantinos Arabites. The text is preserved by two manuscripts, which copy, independently of each other, a manuscript now lost. The author, however, constructs a stemma which contains two more hyparchetypes (p. 163–164), the existence of which cannot be proved by any facts. The fact that on the basis of only two manuscripts the editor detected the existence of three more (now lost) archetypes or hyparchetypes is an absurdity. But what is more serious: the author seems not to have realized that Konstantinos Arabites had at his disposal a source (probably a lexicon), now lost, which contained valuable information about certain texts of Greek literature.

Let me give a few examples: chapter 6, 17–19 (p. 176) *γεισίπους τοῦτο ὁ Φειδύλου φησί· καθ' ὃν ἐν τῇ ἑξηκοστῇ Ὀλυμπιάδι πάλιν ἐνίκα Κρίτων ὁ ἐξ Ἱμέρας ἣν Θέρσιν εὑρέσθαι λόγος· οὐδ' Ἄθηντον ἐξ Ἀλαίσης*. Obviously Arabites speaks about an ancient author here. What is rather amazing is the fact that a certain athlete Criton (or Crison) from the Sicilian Himera is a well-attested figure (see Krison von Himera, *RE* XI (2), 1922, 1893; a papyrus fragment names him Kriton, see *FGH* 415, 7, vol. 3B, 309); his activity is placed around the 83rd Olympiad –

the indication ἑξηκοστῇ of our text may be due to a scribal mistake. The word πάλιν of the text of Arabites is to be corrected into πάλην. But who is the author referred to by Arabites? Was the name of that author Ἡγησίπους or Ἡγήσιππος? And what about the name of his father Φαίδυλος? Does Arabites refer to a completely unknown figure? A certain mythographer Hegesippos of Pallene is mentioned by the patriarch Photios. Is he to be identified with the mysterious Γεισίπους referred to by Arabites? And how is the phrase that follows to be interpreted? We may rewrite the text preserved by the manuscripts as follows: *οὐ Δάθην τὸν ἐξ Ἀλαίσης*. Alaisa is a well-known Sicilian town. But who is this Dathes (or Dathis)? I am inclined to believe that some piece of information, unknown to us so far and referring to the foundation of Himera, was contained in the source used by Arabites.

This is corroborated by some further examples. Let us see chapter 24, 41–44 (p. 199): *ὄρθιος γὰρ ὁ λοίσθιος λόγος, ὃς καὶ τὸ πολύρρηνας ἐξεῖπε καὶ τὸ ἀφνειὸς ἐκείνῳ προσέθηκε· καὶ ἐν τῷ κωμικῷ δὲ Διϊφίλῳ δρᾶμα ἀλειπτίας γεγραμμένον ἔνεστιν εὑρεῖν τὰ τοιαῦτα*. There is no doubt that the author refers to the comedian Diphilos (Δίφιλος, not Διΐφιλος), who wrote a comedy entitled Ἀλείπτρια. Arabites does not seem to invent things that did not exist.

In chapter 26, 7–8 (p. 201) we come across the following passage: *ἀγάκλειτος οὖν καὶ περίδοξος, ὀνομάκλυτος, ὡς παρὰ Τιμωνίδῃ*. We know of a certain Timonides, a companion of Dion, who wrote the history of his attempt to overthrow Dionysios the second. But the possibility that the form Τιμωνίδῃ is a scribal error for Σιμωνίδῃ cannot be excluded. In chapter 33, 8–9 (p. 209) we come across another obscure name: *οὐδὲ πιννοτῆραι πίονες τυχγάνουσι, καὶ παρθενοπίαι τὸ μάλιστα, ὡς καὶ Πολύδηλος ἔφησεν*. No author bearing the name Polydelos is attested, however we know about a certain comedian called Polyzelos. Is to be identified with the obscure author "quoted" by Arabites? How are we to explain the existence of several unidentified passages of Hipponax (e. g. chapter 33, 1, p. 208)? How can we explain the reference to a certain (author?) Διώρης in chapter 27, 6 (p. 204)? Frankly speaking, I do not know. What one expected from the editor of that strange text was just to point out those difficulties, but she failed to do even that.

Let us see some other obscure passages of Arabites's text, which the editor seems to have failed to understand:

Chapter 1, 4–5 (p. 173) *αἴτῃ τε τὸ τὸν αὐτὸν εἴτ' οὖν ἴτῃ τρόπον, ἄρτι πρὸς τῶν ἐν τρυφῇ ᾔτουν*. The words *αἴτης* and *ἴτης* denote a beggar. The manuscript of Cremona omits the article τὸ; this is the good reading! The text should have been edited as follows: *αἴτῃ τε τὸν αὐτὸν εἴτ' οὖν ἴτῃ τρόπον*. The article τὸν in the manuscript of Florence is due to dittography. I would also suggest that in-

stead of *ἄρτι* we should read *ἄρτον*; The ending -ον may be easily confused with the -ι in byzantine manuscripts.

Chapter 1, 6–7 (p. 173) *βραδεῖ τῷ τοῦ λόγου ποδί, πρὸς τὸ κατὰ σκοπὸν ἐχώρουν*. The editor emends *τὸ* into *τῷ*. This is hardly necessary. The phrase *τὸ τοῦ λόγου* means: “according to the proverb”.

Chapter 2, 1–2 (p. 173) *Γραφεῖ μὲν τὰ πρὸς τὸ γράφειν προσῆκεν, ὥσπερ χαλκεῖ πυράγρᾳ καὶ σὺν ἄκμονι ῥαιστήρ· ὧδε ὀρθογραφίᾳ φίλον τὸ βιβλίων οὐκ ὀλίγων ἐν περιλήψει γενέσθαι*. As it is published, the text makes no sense at all. The reading of the manuscript of Cremona *ὧ δὲ* should have led the editor to detect the correct form: *ᾧ δὲ ὀρθογραφία φίλον, τὸ βιβλίων οὐκ ὀλίγων ἐν περιλήψει γενέσθαι*. The meaning is: “whoever loves proper writing, should collect a lot of books”.

Chapter 4, 5 (p. 174) *Εἰρέσιον ὅδε ᾕρηκεν, ἐδῄωσεν Γέργιθον, τῆνον ἔργον ἔθηκε πυρός*. Since the text refers to place-names, we should write *Τῆνον*, the Aegean island.

Chapter 6, 21 (p. 176) *ἵππων τούτων ἡγεῖτο Μιλήσιος*. We should probably write Ἵππων (a proper name).

Chapter 6, 22–23 (p. 176) *τὸν μὲν ἄρδην τοῦ ζῆν λόγος ἐκβαλεῖν, τὸν δὲ ἰόν*. The editor emends *ἄρδιν* into *ἄρδην*. But *ἄρδις* is the point of an arrow.

Chapter 8, 6–7 (p. 178) *καὶ νευρῶν παιδευθέντα κατατρέχειν*. We should write *νεβρῶν* (deers).

Chapter 25, 1–2 *ἡμεῖς ὑπὸ εὐπαθίας εὐμαθίᾳ προσελθόντες, κακὰ πολλὰ πέποσθε*. We should probably emend: *ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ εὐπαθίας ἀμαθείᾳ*.

Chapter 28, 17 (p. 206) *οἱ γὰρ ἰσχανόωντες φιλότητος*. From Homer, *Odyssey* 8, 288.

Chapter 33, 14 (p. 209) *οἱ Φασκλῖται*. We should probably write *οἱ Φασηλῖται* (the inhabitants of Phaselis, a town of Pamphylia).

Chapter 33, 17 (p. 209) *ὅτε καὶ Χόμιτλον ἦν*. The editor points out that no word Χόμιτλον is preserved. However, we came across in TLG the gloss *χέμιτλον εἶδος νόσου*, preserved by Theognostus. The text of Arabites is to be emended.

This is just a small sample of the numerous obscurities we came across while reading the text of Arabites. It is rather curious that Arabites in the late Paleologan period might have had at his disposal an unknown source preserving some unknown passages of Greek literature, and it is a pity that the editor of the text failed to notice that.

Prof. Dr. Ioannis Polemis: Department of Philology, Athens University, GREECE;
jpolemis@phil.uoa.gr

Szymon Olszaniec, Prosopographical studies on the court elite in the Roman empire (4th century AD). Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2013. 488 S. ISBN 978-83-231-3143-4.

Bei diesem Buch handelt es sich um die Habilitationsschrift (S. 7: „postdoctoral degree thesis") von Olszaniec, die 2007 an der Universität Toruń eingereicht wurde. Im selben Jahr wurde das umfangreiche Gesamtwerk (700 S.), das neben der Prosopographie auch einen analytischen Teil umfasst, in polnischer Sprache publiziert (dazu W. Ceran, BZ 102, 2009, 258 – 261). 2013 erschien dann die hier zu besprechende englische Übersetzung (dazu bereits L. Lemcke, *Classical Review* 130/N.S. 66, 2016, 225 – 227), in der allerdings nur die Prosopographie enthalten ist.

Das Buch besteht aus folgenden Teilen: Preface (S. 7– 8), I. Introduction (S. 9 – 33), I.1. Palace ministries in the hierarchy of ranks (S. 9 – 22), I.2. Civil law privileges (S. 23 – 33), II. The prosopography (S. 35 – 439), II.1. Initial assumptions: the way of making biograms (S. 35 – 37), II.2. The biograms (S. 37– 439), Summary (S. 441– 442), Fasti of comites consistoriani divided according to particular courts (S. 443 – 447), List of abbreviations (S. 449 – 455), Bibliography (S. 457– 486).

Der Titel ist jedoch in doppelter Hinsicht irreführend: Erstens handelt es sich nicht um „prosopographical studies", für die noch eine entsprechende Auswertung notwendig wäre (die Zusammenfassung S. 441– 442 kann die ausgelassenen Partien nicht ersetzen), sondern nur um eine reine „prosopography". Zweitens wird nicht die gesamte „court elite" untersucht, sondern nur die Personen, die eines der folgenden Hofämter innehatten: *magister officiorum*, *comes sacrarum largitionum*, *comes rei privatae*, *quaestor*.

Vergleicht man das Werk von Olszaniec mit der *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (*PLRE*), so fällt ein deutlicher grundsätzlicher Fortschritt auf. Während die *PLRE*, was oft kritisiert wurde, eine reine Sammlung der Quellenbelege ist und moderne Forschungsliteratur nicht zitiert, ist Olszaniec bemüht, diese zu den einzelnen Personen möglichst vollständig zusammenzustellen. Ein Werk, in dem dieses Ziel erfolgreich umgesetzt ist, muss zweifellos als eine der wichtigsten Leistungen auf dem Gebiet der Prosopographie und als unverzichtbares Arbeitsinstrument gelten. Doch ist das hier der Fall? Eine Prüfung einiger der Biogramme gibt hierüber Aufschluss.

Zunächst kurz zum Aufbau. Im Gegensatz zur chronologischen Ordnung der ursprünglichen Fassung sind die Einträge nun alphabetisch angeordnet und umfassen jeweils bis zu neun Abschnitte: 1. Identifikation und Name(n), 2. Sozialer und regionaler Hintergrund, 3. Laufbahn vor dem Palastamt, 4. Amt im Consistorium (a. Umstände der Annahme, b. Alter bei der Annahme, c. Verlauf der Amtsbekleidung, d. Ende der Amtsbekleidung), 5. Weitere Laufbahn, 6. Religion, 7.

Familie und Verbindungen, 8. Weitere Informationen (Bildung, Qualifikationen), 9. Literatur.

Anatolius (S. 45–46): Das Biogramm setzt gleich mit Punkt 2 ein und geht auf die Namen nicht ein (was nicht nur dort der Fall ist: S. 38). Die Behauptung, Anatolius stammte wohl aus dem Westen des Reiches (S. 45), wird nicht weiter begründet.

Drepanius Pacatus (S. 132–137): Die Identifikation des Panegyrikers mit dem christlichen Verfasser einer Schrift gegen Porphyrios wird S. 133 mit Anm. 568 ohne weitere Begründung abgelehnt (dazu noch W. A. Baehrens, Pacatus. *Hermes* 56, 1921, 443–445, der von Olszaniec hier nicht, aber S. 133, Anm. 574 in anderem Zusammenhang genannt wird). Besonders ärgerlich ist aber, dass die Identifikation mit dem christlichen Autor der Schrift *De cereo paschali* (dazu zuletzt mit der älteren Literatur A. Cameron, The last pagans of Rome. Oxford 2011, 227–230 – ein im Literaturverzeichnis nicht genanntes Werk) weder diskutiert noch überhaupt erwähnt wird. Für einen Überblick über die Literatur zu Pacatus aus den letzten Jahren verweise ich auf meine eigenen bibliographischen Notizen in *Antiquité Classique* 86 (2017) 397–401.

Felix (S. 168–172): Auch hier erfolgt keine Diskussion der Namensform(en). S. 168 wird ein Beitrag von K. Christ genannt, ohne dass ein entsprechendes Zitat in den Anmerkungen erfolgt; allein die Tatsache, dass nur ein Titel Christs im Literaturverzeichnis zitiert ist (S. 470), hält den daraus entstehenden zusätzlichen Aufwand in Grenzen. Die Folgerungen aus dem Datum des Gesetzes *CTh* 9,42,5 (9. März 362) für ein „somewhat later date of nomination" nach der Beförderung des Mamertinus (S. 169) sind unzulässig, da Felix schon vorher im Amt gewesen sein kann. Ebensowenig kann aus den (an einigen Stellen nicht miteinander übereinstimmenden) Berichten der Kirchenhistoriker über die Plünderung der Kirche Antiochias eine „special commission to seize church property" (S. 170) gefolgert werden, während der S. 170, Anm. 761 (und S. 171, Anm. 766, wo XXIII statt XXII zu lesen ist) ebenfalls dafür als Gewährsmann angeführte Ammianus Marcellinus nichts dazu sagt. Wenn aus dem S. 170 angeführten, erstmals bei Theodoret belegten Ausspruch „some theological knowledge of Christianity" (S. 171, ähnlich S. 172) gefolgert wird, drängt sich die Frage auf, ob Olszaniec sich jemals näher mit der Frage nach der Zuverlässigkeit Theodorets, die in der Forschung sehr niedrig veranschlagt wird, befasst hat. Gregor von Nazianz ist keine explizite Quelle für Felix (S. 171 mit Anm. 767), sondern geht nur allgemein und ohne Namen zu nennen auf die Ereignisse in Antiochia ein.

Helpidius (S. 217–222): Aus den in dem Gesetz *CTh* 11, 39, 5 nicht genannten Namen lassen sich keine weiterführenden Schlüsse auf die Abwesenheit bestimmter Personen ziehen (so aber S. 219, Anm. 1023), zumal wenn die Annahme einiger Forscher, statt des überlieferten *et cetera* sei nach der Liste der Personen *et ceteris* zu lesen, zutrifft. Entsprechend sind auch die Folgerungen zu Basileios von Ankyra, wozu weder der Beitrag von Woods in *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992) 31–39 noch der von Teitler in *Vigiliae Christianae* 50 (1996) 73–80 über die Glaubwürdigkeit seiner Passio genannt werden, unzulässig. Zur Kommission zur Beschlagnahmung von Kirchengütern (S. 219 mit Anm. 1024, wo erneut der sich nicht dazu äußernde Ammianus zitiert wird) siehe oben zu Felix. Es ist nicht sehr sinnvoll, die Aussage des Nikephoros Kallistu Xanthopulos, der Tod des Helpidius sei die Strafe für die Plünderung der Kirche in Antiochia, in Text und Anmerkung zu zitieren, wenn Nikephoros an dieser Stelle nur den in diesem Zusammenhang nicht genannten Philostorgios abschreibt.

Jovius (S. 227–230): Hier wird S. 227 unter Punkt 3 behauptet, Jovian habe Jovius zum *quaestor* gemacht, während das unter Punkt 4a richtig für Julian konstatiert wird. Ebenfalls S. 227 wird Constantius II. zum Onkel (statt richtig Cousin) Julians gemacht. Auf den Titel des *vir clarissimus*, den in der Auflistung von *CTh* 11, 39, 5 nur Iovius trägt, lassen sich keine weiteren Folgerungen aufbauen (angedeutet S. 229), da auch von den zahlreichen Gesetzen des Jahres 362 nur zwei der im Codex Theodosianus erhaltenen (*CTh* 3, 1, 3 und *CTh* 7, 4, 8) den beiden Konsuln diesen Titel zuerkennen. Zum Status des Oreibasios als *quaestor* (S. 229) siehe unten zu diesem. Die Vermutung, Iovius sei Heide gewesen, da er während Julians gesamter Regierungszeit für ihn tätig war und zu seinem Beraterkreis gehörte (S. 230), liegt nahe, ist aber spekulativ, da die christliche Symbolik der Münzprägung des Julianverwandten Procopius während seiner Usurpation und mehr noch das christliche Bekenntnis des *primicerius domesticorum* und späteren Kaisers Jovian belegt, dass Julian keineswegs Christen vollständig aus seiner näheren Umgebung verbannte. Verwunderlich ist, dass S. 227 Punkt 1 zu den Namen fehlt, aber eine kurze Diskussion dazu S. 230 unter Punkt 7 erfolgt.

Mamertinus (S. 259–267): Sonderbar ist, dass S. 259 zur Namensform nicht das große Werk „Consuls of the later Roman empire" für die Belege zitiert wird, obwohl es Olszaniec bekannt ist (S. 466, zitiert S. 264, Anm. 1275). Die These, dass Mamertinus zunächst nur die Prätorianerpräfektur des Illyricum erhielt (S. 261, so auch S. 169) erscheint zwar durch Amm. 21, 12, 25 belegt, doch wären dazu die Ausführungen des Kommentars von Szidat zur Stelle heranzuziehen, der auf Basis des Sprachgebrauchs des Ammianus darlegt, dass Mamertinus von Anfang an Präfekt von Italien und Illyricum war. Die „reform of the public post" Julians

(S. 263) ist ein hartnäckig fortbestehender Mythos; seine Gesetzgebung weicht insgesamt nicht wesentlich von der des Constantius II. ab. Als Beleg dafür kann auch die Inschrift von Concordia (S. 263 mit Anm. 1272; wenn Olszaniec Concordia entgegen der Angabe der Inschrift auf Sizilien verortet, ist das wohl einer Vermengung mit *CTh* 8, 5, 16 geschuldet). Für neuere Literatur zu Mamertinus siehe mein oben zu Pacatus zitiertes Werk.

Oreibasios (S. 302–307): Es entbehrt nicht einer gewissen Ironie, dass einer der gewichtigsten Kritikpunkte mit der Beurteilung der Belege für Oreibasios als *quaestor* Julians (S. 303–304) zu tun hat. Olszaniec kann mit der Suda, der *Artemii Passio* und Kedrenos zwar drei Autoren anführen, begnügt sich aber mit dem rein quantitativen Argument, ohne auf die Zuverlässigkeit der Quellen oder ihre möglichen Verbindungen untereinander einzugehen. So fällt auf, dass die *Passio* und Kedrenos in einem sehr verdächtigen Zusammenhang, nämlich dem angeblichen letzten Orakel von Delphi, von Oreibasios als *quaestor* sprechen. In der Literatur zu diesem Orakel, die bei Olszaniec nicht verwertet ist, herrscht weitgehende Einigkeit darüber, dass es sich um ein späteres Konstrukt zur Verdammung Julians handelt (dazu zuletzt S. Trovato, Antieroe dai molti volti. Giuliano l'Apostata nel medioevo bizantino. Udine 2014, 399–400 und B. Bleckmann / M. Stein, Philostorgios Kirchengeschichte II. Kommentar. Paderborn 2015, 340–343, dort 342 skeptisch gegenüber der Angabe zum *quaestor*). Gegen die Suda spricht neben dem Inhalt des Gebotenen auch die Tatsache, dass einige Artikel der Suda aus der Philostorgios-Tradition stammen, zu der auch die *Passio* und Kedrenos gehören. Somit scheinen alle drei Berichte letztlich auf denselben Traditionsstrang zurückzugehen. Vollkommen verfehlt ist die Behauptung, der Ratschlag, den Oreibasios laut Eunapios an Julian gerichtet haben soll, sei ein „significant proof" (S. 304) für sein Amt. Zwar ist richtig, dass er diesen Ratschlag (wenn es sich denn um ein authentisches Zitat handeln sollte) in seiner Eigenschaft als Mitglied des *consistorium* gegeben haben wird, aber einen Beweis für ein Amt stellt er nicht dar.

S. 303 wird den tendenziösen und teils propagandistischen Berichten über die Zeit Julians als Caesar in Gallien zuviel Glauben geschenkt. Eine „tradition to grant doctors high positions at the court" (S. 304) trifft den Kern der Sache nicht; richtig ist vielmehr, dass das unverzichtbare Vertrauensverhältnis des Kaisers zu seinem Arzt nicht selten auch in einer politischen Förderung seinen Niederschlag fand. Vollkommen unerwähnt bleibt der Beleg für Oreibasios aus der *Anthologia Graeca* (16, 274).

Die Literatur ist ausgesprochen lückenhaft eingearbeitet. Neben einigen allgemeinen Standardwerken ist ein knapper polnischer Lexikonartikel die einzige Besonderheit. Dafür fehlen S. Faro, Oribasio medico, quaestor di Giuliano

l’apostata, in: Studi in onore di Cesare Sanfilippo VII. Mailand 1987, 261–268 und U. Hartmann, Oreibasios in Persien, in R. Rollinger / B. Truschnegg (Hrsg.), Altertum und Mittelmeerraum. Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante, Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag. Stuttgart 2006, 343–364. Vermutlich zu spät, um noch berücksichtigt zu werden, erschien G. Sabbah, Figures de médecins autour de l’empereur Julien, in A. Garcea / M.-K. Lhommé / D. Vallat (Hrsg.), Polyphonia romana. Hommages à Frédérique Biville II. Hildesheim 2013, 689–711. Auch die Literatur zu dem von Oreibasios verfassten Bericht über den Perserzug, aus dem sich nicht unbedingt eine „passion for history“ (S. 307) folgern lässt, ist fast gar nicht verwertet (S. 304, Anm. 1495); es wäre zumindest auf P. Janiszewski, The missing link. Greek pagan historiography in the second half of the third century and in the fourth century AD. Warschau 2006, 382–390 zu verweisen gewesen.

Saturninius Secundus Salutius (S. 356–372): Das Unbehagen beginnt bereits bei der Namensform, da Olszaniec auf S. 356 sowohl in der Überschrift als auch in der Auflistung der Namen die Form „Saturninus“ (so noch mehrfach, richtig wäre Saturninius) verwendet. Die als Beleg dafür genannte dritte Inschrift ist AE 1914, Nr. 125 (nicht Nr. 25) und zudem in griechischer Sprache verfasst, wäre also unter den griechischen Zeugnissen zu nennen. S. 356 wird Magnus von Karrhai als Beleg für eine Namensform angeführt, obwohl das Werk dieses Autors verloren und nur über einige Erwähnungen des (für dieselbe Namensform ebenfalls zitierten) Malalas erhalten ist.

Hier geht Olszaniec mit Identifikationen in rhetorischen Texten sehr leichtfertig um: S. 357 mit Anm. 1833 wird Themistios, Or. 7, 23 (99d) als Beleg für einen Philosophenbart des Salutius angeführt, ohne zu problematisieren, dass die Identifikation der namentlich nicht genannten Person an dieser Stelle unsicher ist, aber wahrscheinlich einen Kaiser meint; am häufigsten wird die Stelle auf Julian bezogen, so zuletzt Ch. P. Jones, Themistius after the death of Julian. *Historia* 59 (2010) 501–506, hier 503–505. Ebensowenig ist die Identifikation des Salutius mit dem bei Themistios, Or. 5, 8 (67b) angeführten Nestor (S. 360–361 mit Anm. 1853) gesichert, zumal es sich bei den dort aufgeführten mythischen Gestalten nicht um klar abgegrenzte Einzelpersonen, sondern eher um Repräsentationen der Qualitäten des Kaisers und seiner Berater allgemein handeln dürfte.

S. 361 mit Anm. 1854 bezieht Olszaniec den von Eunapios berichteten Vorwurf gegenüber Salutius korrekt auf seine Amtsführung 365/66, allerdings hätte noch erwähnt werden können, dass einige Forscher diese Passage als Bezugnahme auf seine *recusatio* ansehen. Der S. 361 vorgebrachten Behauptung, Constantius habe eine Usurpation Julians gefürchtet und als ersten Schritt Salutius abberufen, steht die offensichtlich folgenlos bleibende spontane Erhebung zum Augustus nach der

Schlacht bei Straßburg (Amm. 16,12,64) entgegen. Unter den Quellen zur angeblichen kurzzeitigen Entlassung des Salutius (S. 364, Anm. 1871) wäre noch Theodoros Skutariotes, *Synopsis chronike* 58,11–14 (sowie jetzt der erst 2015 erstmals durch R. Tocci edierte Text Theodoros Skutariotes, *Chronika* 2,87) zu ergänzen. Die S. 366 gebotene Charakteristik als „old style"-Präfekt und kaiserlicher „delegate in civilian and military matters" dürfte die Schwerpunkte nicht ganz richtig setzen. Seit Konstantins Erlangung der Alleinherrschaft 324 waren die Kaiser (mit Ausnahme von dezidiert gegen sie gerichteten Usurpationen/Bürgerkriegen) nur noch selten persönlich in Kriegshandlungen involviert, was sich erst wieder mit Julians Perserfeldzug änderte, an dem etwa auch der *magister officiorum* Anatolius teilnahm. Die Ursache für die bemerkte Anomalie dürfte also weniger bei Salutius, sondern vielmehr bei Julian liegen. Die Argumentation dafür, dass Salutius den Titel des *patricius* spätestens 364 innehatte (S. 366–367) stützt sich nur auf Malalas und einige spätere Quellen und kann daher kein Gewicht beanspruchen; es wäre mindestens zu diskutieren gewesen, warum nur Malalas davon weiß und warum die spätere Inschrift des Trajansforum den Titel nicht nennt.

Bei der Diskussion der Frage, ob Salutius die Kaiserwürde nach Julians Tod (Ammianus), nach Jovians Tod (Zosimos und einige Byzantiner) oder in beiden Fällen ablehnte (S. 367–369), gelangt Olszaniec zu der mehrheitlich vertretenen letztgenannten Meinung. Allerdings kennt Olszaniec weder alle Quellen zu dieser Frage (Theodoros Skutariotes, *Synopsis chronike* 57,29–58,3; Theodoros Skutariotes, *Chronika* 2,87 sowie einige abzulehnende Anspielungen bei Themistios und Eunapios) noch die wichtigste Argumentation für die von ihm vertretene These (J. den Boeft/J.W. Drijvers/D. den Hengst/H.C. Teitler, Philological and historical commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXV. Leiden 2005, 174–177) noch die verschiedenen Argumentationen für die in der Forschung vorgebrachten Alternativvorschläge, so nehmen beispielsweise einige Forscher an, Salutius und sein Sohn hätten beide nach dem Tod Julians abgelehnt und Zosimos hätte diese Episode dann falsch eingeordnet.

Sehr interessant ist das S. 370 mit Anm. 1912 angeführte und wohl erstmals erfasste zusätzliche Zeugnis für den (nur durch Zosimos und einige spätere Autoren im Rahmen der *recusatio* belegte) Sohn des Salutius: Libanios, Ep. 1185 (1141, wie bei Olszaniec angegeben, wäre für die Edition Wolfs richtig und scheint auf die benutzerunfreundliche Nummerierung der Edition Försters zurückzugehen). Allerdings ist die Bezugnahme unsicher, da Libanios dort nur auf den Verlust einer Salutius nahen Person eingeht. Entwertet wird das Zeugnis allerdings dadurch, dass Olszaniec einen anderen und aussagekräftigeren Libaniosbrief (1467 = 76 Cabouret), der wohl aus dem Jahr 365 stammt und in dem explizit von einem Kind des Salutius die Rede ist, nicht berücksichtigt.

Auch sonst ist die Literatur nur lückenhaft erfasst. Um nur die wichtigsten Titel zu nennen: R.J. Penella, Himerius and the praetorian prefect Secundus Salutius. *Prometheus* 32 (2006) 85–90; D. Melsbach, Bildung und Religion. Strukturen paganer Theologie in Salustios' Perì theôn kaì kósmou. Diss. Hamburg 2007 sowie die zahlreichen kommentierten Ausgaben des Themistios (S. 464 wird nur eine Edition von 1832 genannt).

Das muss genügen, wenn die Rezension nicht dem Buch an Umfang ähnlich werden soll. Mit Blick auf diese Auswertung ist festzustellen: Die Prosopographie von Olszaniec stellt ein nützliches (wenngleich mit Vorsicht zu benutzendes) Hilfsmittel dar, wird aber den Anforderungen an eine Prosopographie, bei der es doch gerade um Vollständigkeit und Genauigkeit geht, nicht immer gerecht. Das ist der Hauptkritikpunkt, neben dem alle weiteren Einwände weitgehend zweitrangig sind: Die Bibliographie (S. 457–486) ist eine Fundgrube von Ungenauigkeiten und kleineren Fehlern, die auch im Text nicht selten zu finden sind. In der Liste der zitierten Quelleneditionen (S. 457–465) findet sich kaum ein Autor, der nicht nach veralteten Ausgaben zitiert wird, und in einigen Fällen ist die einzige zitierte Ausgabe eine einsprachige Übersetzung (S. 458 für Aurelius Victor, S. 460 für Himerios und S. 462 für Optatus). Die einleitenden Kapitel (S. 9–33) sind ebenso wie die Schlussfolgerungen (S. 441–442) magere Überreste der ursprünglich etwa 250 Seiten umfassenden Studien. Zuletzt merkt man dem Werk auf jeder Seite an, dass es sich um eine mittelmäßige bis schlechte Übersetzung handelt, wofür allerdings die Übersetzer verantwortlich zu machen sind.

Somit muss leider festgestellt werden: Was Olszaniec vorgelegt hat, ist in der Theorie eine hervorragende Idee, deren praktische Umsetzung allerdings nicht in der Lage ist, die dadurch geweckten Erwartungen zu erfüllen. Was er bietet, ist eine hilfreiche und, verglichen mit den meisten anderen neueren Studien, überdurchschnittlich reichhaltige Materialsammlung, die aber durch eigene Recherchearbeiten vervollständigt werden muss. Das Buch ist also mehr als ein einfaches Hilfsmittel, aber doch deutlich weniger als ein elementares Grundlagenwerk.

Raphael Brendel: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Historisches Seminar, Schellingstr. 12, 80799 München, Deutschland; raphaelbrendel@arcor.de

Andreas Schminck † / Dorotei Getov, Repertorium der Handschriften des byzantinischen Rechts. Teil III. Die Handschriften des kirchlichen Rechts II (Nr. 428–527). Auswahl an Handschriften der Kanonessammlungen mit durchgängigen Kommentaren des Alexios Aristenos, Ioannes Zonaras und Theodoros Balsamon.

Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte, 34. Frankfurt am Main, Löwenklau-Gesellschaft 2017. 334 S. ISBN 978-3-923615-34-6.

Im vorliegenden dritten Band des Repertoriums der Handschriften des byzantinischen Rechts werden nach dem bewährten Muster der ersten zwei Bände (1995, 2010) 99 Handschriften beschrieben, die neben Kanonessamlungen auch eine Reihe begleitender Rechtstexte enthalten. Von großem Nutzen ist die Publikation auch für die byzantinische Diplomatik, da in den beschriebenen Manuskripten zahlreiche Kaiser- und Patriarchenurkunden überliefert sind. Vereinzelt finden sich auch Inedita (fast ausschließlich Mikrotexte). Hervorzuheben ist, dass viele Codices aus weniger gut zugänglichen oder bisher nicht ausreichend katalogisierten Beständen behandelt werden (etwa Alexandrien, Athen, Athos, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Meteora, Sinai; auch einige Handschriften aus dem Bereich der bisher in keinem gedruckten Katalog erfassten Codices Vat. gr.). Neben hauptstädtischer Produktion sind auch regionale Zentren vertreten; außer Süditalien (mehrere Manuskripte) noch Trapezunt (116 – 118: Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı 115)[71] und Zypern (26 – 29: Athen, Ἱστορικὸν Μουσεῖον τοῦ Νέου Ἑλληνισμοῦ 256 [*style epsilon:* 12. Jh. 2. Hälfte / 13. Jh. 1. Hälfte; nicht 13./14. Jh.][72]; 92 – 94: Esc. X.III.1. [Vorbesitzer Francesco Patrizi][73]). Erschlossen wird der Band durch ein Register der Kopisten (259 – 260), Vorbesitzer (261 – 263), datierter Handschriften (264: datiert; 265 – 266: nach Jahrhunderten geordnet), der Initia (267 – 272) sowie der Quellen (Autoren und Werke) (273 – 334).

Allgemeine Bemerkungen. Die Verfasser entscheiden sich für eingedeutschte Bezeichnungen der Bibliotheksorte, was aus praktischen Gründen zu begrüßen ist. Dies wird jedoch nicht immer befolgt; vgl. etwa S. 1 (Al-Iskandariyya: nur arabisch) und 197 (Olmütz/Olomouc: zweisprachig). Die Bibliographie ist bewusst knapp gehalten; angesichts dessen wäre es vertretbar, im einleitenden Kopf zu den jeweiligen Bibliotheken nur den neuesten Katalog zu zitieren (vgl. S. 191 [Neapel], wo noch auf die inzwischen ersetzte Arbeit von G. Pierleoni verwiesen wird). Eine ausführlichere Bibliographie wäre im Allgemeinen sehr hilfreich, insbesondere unter dem Aspekt einer möglichst umfassenden Berücksichtigung der speziellen rechtsgeschichtlichen Sekundärliteratur. Auch wäre es nützlich gewesen, die Vorlage der Katalogbeschreibungen (in den meisten Fällen wohl Mikrofilme) ge-

71 Vgl. R. S. Stefec, Aspekte griechischer Buchproduktion in der Schwarzmeerregion. *Scripta* 7 (2014) 205 – 233, hier 210 mit Anm. 67.

72 Ausführliche Beschreibung des Codex bei R. S. Stefec, Varia palaeographica Atheniensia. *RSBN* n. s. 51 (2014) [2015] 137 – 173, hier 151 – 152.

73 Vgl. R. S. Stefec, Zur Geschichte der Handschriften des Francesco Patrizi und des Antonios Eparchos. *Νέα Ῥώμη* 9 (2012) [2013] 245 – 260, hier 250 (Nr. 135) und 253 mit Anm. 26.

sondert auszuweisen. Zu vermeiden ist die Bezeichnung „Bombyzin“ (besser: orientalisches Papier). Nachstehend noch einige Einzelmonita: S. 73: Bearbeiter Athen (?); S. 75 lies Tiftixoglu (so auch S. 74); S. 81 lies Kloster τῶν Στουδίου; S. 104 – 105 (Laur. Plut. 10.10): Datierung Anfang 11. Jh. (statt generell 11. Jh.; Digitalisat); S. 132 (Lond. Addit. 22746): Vorbesitzer ist nicht der griechische Byzantinist Spyridon P. Lampros, sondern dessen Vater Paulos Lampros; S. 137 (Lond. Addit. 28823): Datierung 13. Jh. Ende / 14. Jh. Mitte (Digitalisat) statt 14. Jh.; S. 139 (Lond. Arundel 533): älter als 14. Jh., Papier wohl orientalisch (Digitalisat); S. 144 (Matrit. 4674): lies Ioannes Murmuris statt Juan Múrmuris; S. 203 (Bodl. Holkham gr. 11): lies Ioannes Morezenos (< Morosini) statt Ioannes Morzenos (der Großteil des Fonds Holkham gr. stammt aus der bedeutenden kretischen Bibliothek der Familie Morezenos; vgl. zuletzt Ἰωάννης Μορεζῆνος, Κλίνη Σολομῶντος. Ἱστορίες θαυμάτων τῆς Παναγιᾶς [1599], ed. E. Kakulide-Panu / E. Karantzola / M. Chalbatziadake. Herakleion 2007, S. κζ′–κθ′); S. 233 Nr. 84 lies témoin statt témoine.

Da es angesichts der knappen Ressourcen und des immer geringeren Interesses an substantieller wissenschaftlicher Arbeit und an Quellenstudium jeglicher Art ausgeschlossen ist, dass sämtliche Bestände an griechische Handschriften nach neuesten Methoden der Kodikologie und Paläographie katalogisiert werden, ist der eingeschlagene Weg der speziellen Repertorien wohl die einzige Möglichkeit, die Erforschung der jeweiligen Textsorte (im vorliegenden Fall byzantinischer Rechtstexte) voranzutreiben. Anders als im Falle des klassischen Katalogs, der neben der jeweiligen Bestandsgeschichte auch alle kodikolgisch-paläographischen Aspekte zu berücksichtigen hat, kommt hier der überlieferungsgeschichtliche Aspekt verstärkt zum Tragen (die Beschreibungen enthalten zahlreiche Angaben zur Filiation der Textzeugen). Dadurch bietet die vorliegende Arbeit einen etwas anderen, aber dennoch willkommenen Querschnitt durch die griechische Buchproduktion. Es wäre sehr wünschenswert, wenn die Reihe der Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte mit einem weiteren Band des Repertoriums fortgesetzt werden könnte.

Dr. Rudolf Stefec: Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien, Postgasse 7/1/3, 1010 Wien, Österreich; rudolf.stefec@univie.ac.at

Raimondo Tocci (ed.), Theodori Scutariotae Chronica. *CFHB*, 46. Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter 2015. VII + 178* + 364 S. Mit 2 Tafeln. ISBN 978-3-11-018946-9.

El presente volumen contiene la *editio princeps* de una crónica bizantina (*Χρονικά*, en adelante Χρ.) que cuenta de forma sucinta la historia universal desde Adán hasta la muerte del emperador Alejo I en el año 1118. Simplemente por eso y por el exquisito cuidado que el editor Raimondo Tocci (en adelante T) pone en la edición del texto, la obra se convierte ya en un acontecimiento de primer nivel dentro de la historiografía bizantina, que no acostumbra a encontrarse con inéditos de esta entidad y envergadura. Pero es que además la edición está precedida de una detallada y rigurosa introducción sobre el autor, el manuscrito y la obra que, partiendo de trabajos previos de T, se convierte en una monografía de referencia. Dado que ya ha habido alguna reseña que describe con detalle el contenido del volumen,[74] pensamos que será más interesante dar aquí cuenta de sus aportaciones de una manera más libre, centrándonos primero en el problema de su autoría y función y luego, más brevemente, en los criterios editoriales. Entiéndanse las observaciones que siguen como aportaciones y sugerencias a algunas de las tesis de T.

Los Χρ., conservados en único ms., el Vat. gr. 1889, no habían merecido hasta la fecha el interés de los estudiosos porque se los había considerado un simple resumen en *excerpta* de la *Σύνοψις χρονική* (en adelante Σ) editada por Konstantinos Sathas en 1894 en el volumen VII de su *Bibliotheca Graeca Medii Aevi* y que August Heisenberg atribuyó ya en 1901 a Teodoro Escutariota (nacido ca. 1230). La posibilidad inversa, que la versión breve de los Χρ. fuera usada como fuente de la Σ, no fue debidamente considerada por los estudiosos, pues durante mucho tiempo los editores de textos griegos basaban su formación filológica en los autores clásicos, de los que no disponemos por lo general ni de fuentes ni de borradores de sus originales, y eran por lo general poco receptivos ante la posibilidad de documentar físicamente con manuscritos los estadios preparatorios de un texto. La realidad ha demostrado recientemente que en algunos casos la supuesta versión breve es la base de la larga, un proceso que es muy frecuente en historiografía y para el que tenemos un paralelo reciente en el tratado *Sobre los edificios* de Procopio: tal como ha demostrado Federico Montinaro, la versión breve del mismo no es una sinopsis posterior, sino una primera versión del autor que este amplió posteriormente[75]. Una similar inversión de las

---

74 Véase J. M. Floristán en *Erytheia* 37 (2016) 364 – 368.

75 F. Montinaro, Byzantium and the Slavs in the reign of Justinian. Comparing the two recensions of Procopius's Buildings, en V. Ivanišević / M. Kazanski (eds.), The Pontic-Danubian

relaciones entre Σ y Χρ. es la que plantea T en una de las secciones más relevantes de su documentada introducción („Das Verhältnis der Χρονικά zur Σύνοψις χρονική“, p. 102*–113*). Con argumentos a mi entender de peso T demuestra no solo que los Χρ. fueron reescritos por el autor de la Σ con un estilo pulido y mayor nivel de detalle, sino que 65 de los 70 añadidos marginales al texto de los Χρ. fueron incluidos en el cuerpo central de Σ. Es más, no deja de haber tampoco pasajes de los Χρ. que no aparecen en Σ y que indican, como bien concluye T, que los Χρ. no eran un resumen de Σ, sino que Σ se basó en Χρ.

Una vez admitida esta idea, T argumenta que los Χρ. eran también obra de Escutariota. Para ello se basa en que el codex unicus de los Χρ., el Vat. gr. 1889, que describió con detalle en un apartado previo (p. 47*–63*, donde se realiza también un análisis de la tipología de los escolios y anotaciones), es datable entre los años 1270 – 1280 y representa un „Arbeitsexemplar“ del propio Escutariota, cuya letra T identifica con las anotaciones marginales del autor presentes en el Par. gr. 1741. No estamos en condiciones de objetar el carácter autógrafo del ms. Vat. gr. 1889, puesto que no se nos presentan láminas en el volumen, aunque el autor parece haber estudiado con detalle la letra de Escutariota y valorado los estudios previos al respecto (véanse p. 96*–101* al final de su documentada biografía del personaje, que comienza en p. 64*), pero sí creemos que la atribución a Escutariota de la autoría de los Χρ. por el hecho de que el Vat. gr.1889 sea de su mano, es más que discutible y no está suficientemente justificada. En efecto, el hecho de que Escutariota, como copista del Vat. gr. 1889, actuara como compilador y excerptador de los textos que incluyó en él, especialmente en los márgenes, no significa que debamos atribuir toda la concepción de los Χρ. a Escutariota. No se trata solo de que en obras de este tipo haya una clara dependencia respecto a fuentes previas, que T identifica claramente a propósito de la Σ que se basaba en ella (p. 83*–95*), sino de que es difícil pensar que Escutariota realizara la armonización y selección de fuentes directamente en el ejemplar del Vat. gr. 1889, que presenta un texto muy compacto y ordenado que podría ser a su vez la refección de otro texto previo hoy perdido o, si se quiere, la combinación de dos o tres textos anteriores.

En este sentido puede apuntar la división de la obra en dos bloques diferenciados. Sobre esto queremos detenernos un poco. Según T, el manuscrito

---

realm in the period of the Great Migration. *Centre de recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance*, *Monographies* 36 / *Arheološki institut*, *Posebna izdanja*, *Knjiga* 51. Paris/Beograd 2011, 89 – 114; y F. Montinaro, Power, taste and the outsider: Procopius and the Buildings revisited, en G. Greatrex / H. Elton / L. McMahon (eds.), Shifting genres in Late Antiquity. Farnham 2015, 192 – 206.

vaticano ofrece el siguiente título, autógrafo del propio Escutariota al igual que el resto de la obra:

> Χρονικά – παρεκβόλαια συντετμημένα ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ἄχρι καὶ τῆς βασιλείας Ἀλεξίου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ διεξιόντα ὅσοι τε βασιλεῖς καὶ ὅσοι πατριάρχαι γεγόνασιν (p. 5)

T edita este título, sin embargo, en mayúsculas y precedido de la referencia al supuesto autor Θεοδώρου Σκουταριώτου entre corchetes angulares. Además, en vez el guión largo que separa las palabras Χρονικά y παρεκβόλαια, introduce un salto de línea tras Χρονικά. El aparato crítico recoge este guión entre ambas palabras y nos remite a la p. 5* de la introducción, donde T nos indica que este guión es un „Gedankenstrich" que separa lo que él considera el título de la obra (la palabra Χρονικά) de lo que califica como „subtítulo" („Untertitel"), que es el resto del encabezamiento. Tal como lo edita T la secuencia podría traducirse como „Crónica[76] – *excerpta* abreviados desde Adán hasta incluso el reinado de Alejo Comeno que refieren cuantos emperadores y cuantos patriarcas ha habido". Este enunciado, sin embargo, plantea algún problema y, como veremos, no refleja lo que presenta el manuscrito.

Para empezar, se nos dice que la obra contiene referencias a los emperadores y patriarcas, pero esto es solo cierto para la parte II del texto de los Χρ. que comienza en la p. 28 y que cuenta la historia de los gobernantes de Roma empezando por Eneas y los reyes etruscos y pasando luego directamente, tras una mención a los cónsules, a Julio César y los emperadores de Roma[77]. Junto a los correspondientes emperadores, el texto hace referencia a los patriarcas dentro de los correspondientes reinados. Significativamente, esta segunda parte tiene un título propio, que T edita de la siguiente manera:

> Σημείωσαι ὅτι ἐντεῦθεν ἄρχονται οἱ βασιλεῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας τοῦ Ἰουλίου etc. (p. 28.1–2)

Quizás es a esta parte II de la obra, donde aparecen los emperadores y los patriarcas, a la que hace referencia la secuencia final del título, concretamente a partir de ἄχρι καὶ τῆς βασιλείας. Si esto es correcto, entonces el καί adverbial que

---

76 Traduzco por el singular el neutro plural χρονικά que literalmente podría verterse como „materiales cronográficos".

77 El mismo esquema, que no es muy usual, aparece en el breve opúsculo histórico atribuido al patriarca Focio y conservado en el ms. Lambeth Sion L40.2/G6 editado por Ch. Faraggiana di Sarzana, Fra teologia, cronografia e diritto: una singolare compilazione eresiologica dei primi decenni del secolo XI, con un inedito di Fozio. *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 47 (2010) 141–175.

sigue al ἄχρι podría entenderse, no con un valor inclusivo, sino como una precisión posterior a la indicación de que la obra empieza desde Adán, como si los contenidos que siguen hasta el emperador Alejo se hubieran añadido posteriormente a los παρεκβόλαια συντετμημένα ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ que constituyen la parte I de la obra.

Un apoyo paleográfico a esta suposición está en el hecho de que las palabras iniciales del título están copiadas con un generoso espaciado, mientras que se aprietan en la secuencia final, sin duda porque el autor no quería que desbordaran la línea inicial del título, separada del comienzo del texto por dos líneas en blanco. No lo consiguió, sin embargo, por lo que la parte final del título continúa en el margen superior izquierdo debajo del final de la línea, donde se escribe πατριάρχαι γεγόνασιν. Si el autor hubiera escrito el título completo de una sola vez ni habría espaciado tanto las palabras iniciales ni habría apretado la escritura para intentar que no superase la primera línea de la página, sino que, en todo caso, o habría apretado el título en una línea o lo habría distribuido en dos líneas y dejado otras dos en blanco para empezar el texto de la obra más abajo de donde ahora comienza. La idea de que el título llegaba inicialmente solo hasta ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ y luego, con el añadido posterior de la parte II, se amplió con las precisiones que siguen a ἄχρι καὶ τῆς βασιλείας permite explicar esta distribución.

Si nuestra interpretación es correcta, entonces la secuencia Χρονικά – παρεκβόλαια συντετμημένα ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ era inicialmente solo el título de la parte I, que contiene una breve historia del mundo desde Adán hasta Cleopatra. No obstante, esta primera parte del título presenta también problemas. La idea de un título y un subtítulo, como defiende T, no parece del todo justificada. Si se mira con atención el manuscrito[78] se aprecia que lo que T señala como un „Gedankenstrich" (que marca con un guión largo en el aparato crítico de su edición) no es una simple línea, sino una sucesión de signos. La parte final es claramente legible como un número, πθ (89), que viene cruzado por una línea horizontal. Entre este número y Χρονικά se puede apreciar claramente otro signo que se asemeja a una π con bucle abierto a la izquierda, que no parece dar mucho sentido y que eventualmente sí podría entenderse como una simple marca de separación, de forma que el número que sigue calificaría a los παρεκβόλαια συντετμημένα y tendríamos que entender el sintagma como „89 *excerpta* abreviados", ya que el participio perfecto de συντέμνω se utiliza con mucha frecuencia en textos bizantinos como sinónimo de σύντομος.

---

78 Agradezco a Paula Caballero Sánchez una autopsia del mismo en la Vaticana en junio de 2017.

No obstante, es también posible que el signo que precede a πθ oculte en realidad una palabra, que solo podría ser una preposición que determinaría a πθʹ παρεκβόλαια y que iría regida por el participio συντετμημένα. En ese caso, el participio iría concertando con Χρονικά, ya que no habría separador gráfico o guión en la secuencia del título. El título diría entonces algo así como „Crónica abreviada en 89 *excerpta*“. La opción más probable sería entender el signo como una ligadura de *épsilon* y *sigma*. El primer bucle sería de la *épsilon*, cuyo trazo superior formaría un arco sobre la letra, del que se puede apreciar solo un punto al final. Esto daría sentido, ya que συντέμνω se construye habitualmente con la preposición εἰς[79], pero no es una lectura segura, sobre todo por que la forma arcaizante ἐς no es utilizada por el autor de los Χρ. Si admitiéramos que la letra es una π con un arco de *épsilon* por encima, tendríamos la secuencia επ que tendríamos que entender como abreviatura de ἐπί, pensando que la *iota* final se ha elidido ante la vocal inicial del ὀγδοήκοντα (esto es, π) que sigue. Pero se trata de una construcción mucho menos usual.

Sea como fuere, dado que el número πθʹ (89) sí es claramente legible, el siguiente paso sería comprobar la corrección de esta lectura viendo cuántos son los capítulos o secciones de los que consta la parte I de la obra de Escutariota. Con esto entramos en el problema de la estructuración del texto. T ha dividido la parte I en 78 secciones, un número que no encaja desde luego con el 89 que hemos leído en el título. Pero al hacerlo, T no ha tenido en cuenta las propias indicaciones del manuscrito Vat. gr. 1889 que, según T mismo indica, separa las secciones o capítulos mediante el signo **:–.** Concretamente T escribe (p. 151*): „Ein neues Kapitel setzt immer dann ein, wenn der Autor-Kopist des Vaticanus das starke Pausenzeichen Doppelpunkt mit nachfolgendem Gedankenstreich (:–) setzt“.

Si nos fijamos entonces, veremos que en la parte I el autor utiliza este signo 90 veces, lo que representa una cifra casi idéntica a las 89 secciones que indica el título y confirmaría por lo tanto que nuestra lectura es correcta y que, además, la primera parte del título se refería solo a la parte I de la obra y fue luego completada con nuevas precisiones cuando Escutariota añadió la parte II, quizás pensando ya entonces en la redacción de su Σύνοψις. Esto indicaría además que el plan de redactar esta obra fue desarrollándose a medida que Escutariota copiaba de sus fuentes y que la dependencia de nuestro autor de ellas (del original de las partes I y II de Χρ.) es mayor de lo que supone T, que hizo a

79 *Cf.* τὸ εἰς βραχὺ συντετμημένον ξύλον, Hesichio s.v. κορμός; τὰ δὲ εἰ βραχύτητα συντέμνων, Filón, *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* 106; τοὺς … γεγραμμένους λόγους συντεμεῖν εἰς ἔλαττον, Focio, *Biblioteca* cod. 216, 173b–174a.

Escutariota, como vimos, autor de Χρ. Podríamos pensar entonces que la fuente de Escutariota para su parte I constaba ya de 89 secciones y que él solo añadió una sección más hasta completar el número de 90 (a menos que supongamos otro tipo de error).

Este problema nos lleva a la cuestión de la puntuación y ortografía del texto, un aspecto que se revela especialmente innovador de la edición y que merece ser comentado de forma breve. El autor tiene el propósito de respetar fielmente la puntuación y ortografía del texto, algo que está justificado por varias razones, pero fundamentalmente porque supone que el texto de los Χρ. es autógrafo del propio Escutariota, que es, tal como podemos ver en la biografía detallada que de él traza en la introducción (p. 64*–101*), un personaje culto y erudito. Además, el hecho de que el ms. vaticano contenga una copia cuidada y que el texto ofrezca un griego por lo general sencillo y fácil de entender por su sintaxis, justifica lo que podemos calificar de „experimento" del editor T. El hecho de que el lector moderno cuente con indicaciones precisas sobre cómo se puntuaba el manuscrito puede además, finalmente, ayudar a su estudio y análisis.

No obstante, la aplicación del criterio presenta problemas. El primero consiste en que aunque T respeta escrupulosamente los distintos signos de puntuación contenidos en el manuscrito los consigna entre paréntesis junto a la puntuación más convencional de las ediciones críticas en griego. Esto provoca un efecto óptico de confusión, que no facilita obviamente la lectura, sobre todo porque el manuscrito puntúa el texto en secuencias muy breves y con una profusión y variedad de signos de la que carecen los modernos usos editoriales, que se limitan básicamente al punto, a la coma y al punto alto. No ayuda a la comprensión el hecho de que el *semicolon* („Strichpunkt") del manuscrito, que es usado con mucha frecuencia (aparece casi en una de cada dos o tres líneas), pueda confundirse con el habitual signo de interrogación. Concedemos que este tipo de ediciones no están por lo general dirigidas sino al lector especializado, que agradece la precisión filológica del editor, pero sin duda esta coexistencia de dos criterios de puntuación no ayuda a la lectura.

Más relevante, sin embargo, me parece el hecho de que puntuar el texto según las convenciones modernas, pese a mantener las del manuscrito, es claro indicio de que la puntuación del manuscrito, a la que se supone una coherencia, no resulta comprensible tampoco para el lector especializado. En efecto, tal como señala T en su introducción, la utilización de los signos de puntuación del manuscrito vaticano es variable y compleja. El mismo T señala hasta 15 usos diferentes del *semicolon* (p. 143*, nota 110) y cada una de las hasta 23 funciones de puntuación que proporciona en p. 144*–145* se corresponde por lo general con más de un signo, provocando que el „System" (T escribe la palabra entre comillas) presente „eine Vielzahl an Funktionsüberschneidungen". Cabe pre-

guntarse en qué medida la puntuación de los textos puede venir arrastrada por inercia de las fuentes usadas por el autor/copista de los Χρ.

Otra cuestión no menor es si un sistema tan complejo puede ser usado coherentemente y si en realidad, dado que (como el propio T señala) el manuscrito representaba una „Arbeitskopie“ destinada a servir de base para la redacción de la Σ, la puntuación podría variar de acuerdo con el modo de „publicación“. A esta pregunta solo podrá responderse con la publicación de la Σ que se convierte en un urgente *desideratum* después de que T haya demostrado que los Χρ. son su fuente y no, como decíamos arriba, una versión abreviada. En cualquier caso, es evidente que hay signos con un carácter muy fuerte de transición, como el signo :– ya señalado arriba para marcar fin de sección (que, por desgracia, T no sigue sistemáticamente en su división de capítulos) y otros signos con uso más variable, que incluso pueden marcar ocasionalmente pausas de copia y no de lectura o entonación, algo que es perfectamente comprensible en una copia de trabajo. Personalmente, y dado el carácter provisional que asumen todas estas cuestiones (reconocido por el propio editor, que señala en p. 143* que el uso de los signos de puntuación está hoy por hoy „weitgehend unerforscht“), yo habría hecho uso sistemático solo de aquellos signos de uso más unívoco y adoptado del resto únicamente aquellos que ofrecieran una ayuda a la comprensión de la secuencia del texto, por pausas de lectura y sintagmas. Un estudio previo de los usos y la recopilación de unos cuantos ejemplos habría bastado para dar cuenta de los problemas. No obstante, el proceder del editor es perfectamente coherente y en todo caso útil para profundizar en estos problemas que cada vez adquieren más relevancia en la edición de los textos y que sin duda querríamos ver reflejados en las ediciones de textos clásicos griegos, para apreciar en qué medida el tratamiento dado a estos textos cerrados por parte de los copistas bizantinos difería del dado a los textos contemporáneos.

Problemas parecidos plantea el hecho de que el editor decida acentuar las palabras del texto de acuerdo con el manuscrito bizantino, sin regularizar sus usos, ya que las inconsistencias son frecuentes. T aborda todos los casos con un detalle y prolijidad modélicos en p. 116*–149* y parece superfluo entrar aquí a discutir sus criterios, que se acercan en ocasiones más a una edición diplomática que a una crítica. En su exposición detallada de la rica casuística ortográfica T intenta explicar, por ejemplo, variaciones en el uso de los acentos para distintas categorías de palabras, como por ejemplo el uso proclítico del artículo (como en ταμεγάλα, marcado incluso en el manuscrito con un guión bajo o ὑφέν) o enclítico de la partícula δέ. Señalaremos solamente que las incongruencias a propósito de una misma palabra son pocas (Ματθαῖον vs. Ματθαίον en §240.11–12) y que la única inseguridad que se presenta al usuario viene dada por el uso

del acento agudo o grave ante pausa. En efecto, T señala en p. 136* solo tres casos de palabras que presentan acento agudo en vez del exigible grave, pero se da la circunstancia de que la acentuación grave o aguda de las palabras parece determinada en la edición, si no nos equivocamos, por la puntuación moderna que adopta T y no por la del manuscrito, que se marca entre paréntesis. De esta forma tenemos casos como φαγών, ὥς §86.9 y καί, ὅτε §331.7 que presentan aguda aunque el manuscrito no tiene, según indica el editor, marca alguna de pausa. Observamos que cuando el manuscrito marca una pausa y T no la adopta en su edición, el acento se mantiene grave, lo que ocurre sistemáticamente cuando el *semicolon* (;) sucede a la oxítona, pero también en otros casos como δὲ (.) I.35.2; γὰρ(,) I.60.10; μὲν(,) II.75.5; δὲ(,) II.95.4, II.111.2; ἀδελφὴν(·) II.107.5; Φλαβιανὸς(.)II.126.2 etc. Las excepciones a esta norma son pocas, como en βασιλεύς(.) II.138.20. Sin embargo, cuando el editor, como ocurre con frecuencia, puntúa también en el mismo sitio que el manuscrito, entonces la palabra presenta sistemáticamente el acento agudo, como por ejemplo en οὐρανόν,(·) II.69.3; λοιποί.(:) II.75.12; εἰπών·(:) II.76.9; ἕν·(·) II 81.8; γραφήν,(·) II.117.44; ἀρχή·(,) II 117.45; τινός·(.) II.145.7; κληρικοί,(.) II.145.9; στολάς·(.) II.263.4 y otros muchísimos casos. El editor ha regularizado por lo tanto la acentuación de acuerdo con su propia puntuación, no la del manuscrito. La cuestión tiene su importancia y quizás T habría debido ser más conservador del *usus* del manuscrito en este aspecto viendo su proceder general.

Por lo que respecta a la *constitutio textus* en sí, el trabajo de T es impecable. Hay cinco aparatos de notas por debajo del texto editado. Por claridad, T ha dividido el tradicional aparato crítico en tres secciones, según se trate de la edición del texto en sí (**VC**, situado abajo del todo), de la edición de los *marginalia* (**MA**, el primero de los aparatos), o de las variantes que el texto presenta con la Σ (**Σ**, situadas en segundo lugar). Son estas última variantes las que más entidad presentan y las que hacen desear una pronta edición deλ texto de la Σ, para la que esperamos que T reúna fuerzas suficientes. En tercer y cuarto lugar están respectivamente el aparato de fuentes y *loci paralleli* (**FP**) y el aparato histórico (**H**). Este último es quizás algo escueto, dada la gran cantidad de informaciones históricas relevantes y datables que ofrece el texto, pero puesto que se trata de sucesos conocidos la economía editorial justifica que T haya procedido selectivamente. En cuanto al aparato de fuentes y paralelos, sin duda el más difícil de conformar siempre, aunque T indica en p. 159* que distingue secuencialmente entre fuentes directas, indirectas y paralelos, separando las referencias por un *semicolon*, la diferencia es difícilmente discernible desde el punto de vista gráfico en el aparato, además de que la distinción entre fuente directa e indirecta resulta en muchos casos difícil de establecer. En cualquier caso, la información proporcionada es la pertinente y necesaria en textos

abiertos de este tipo, e incluye el reenvío a las principales crónicas e historias de referencia.

En definitiva, y más allá de cuestiones de detalle, estamos ante una edición minuciosa y fiable del texto de los Χρ., una obra que a pesar de que presenta un valor histórico limitado (aunque no deje de aportar alguna perla[80]), es esencial para entender el método de trabajo historiográfico de los eruditos bizantinos. Como reflexión final permítaseme decir que si hace unas décadas la crítica textual griega era una disciplina fundamentalmente conformada por la edición de los autores clásicos griegos, ediciones como la presente demuestran que la renovación de la disciplina pasa por las ediciones de textos bizantinos que analizan de forma complexiva todas las posibilidades del texto.

Prof. Dr. Juan Signes Codoñer: Departamento de Filología Clásica, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Plaza del Campus, Universidad de Valladolid, 47011 Valladolid, España; juansignes54@gmail.com

---

80 Entre ellas la anotación marginal en II.274.3 calificando al patriarca Focio como τὸν Μανουηλίτην, una referencia que no se encuentra en ninguna otra fuente y que lo vincula al círculo armenio de Manuel magistro, tío de la emperatriz Teodora, tal como sugería en J. Signes Codoñer, Selbstdarstellung und Schweigen: Überlegungen zu Photios' Vater, en A. Beihammer / B. Krönung / C. Ludwig (eds.), Prosopon Rhomaikon. Ergänzende Studien zur Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit. *Millennium-Studien*, 68. Berlin/Boston 2017, 93 – 110, esp. p. 97.

 DOI 10.1515/bz-2018-0008 — BZ 2018; 111(1): 213–214

Totentafel

Filippo Burgarella 18.12.2017
Slobodan Ćurčić 3.12.2017
Roberto Romano 4.9.2017
Gottfried Schramm 26.10.2017
Mark Whittow 23.12.2017